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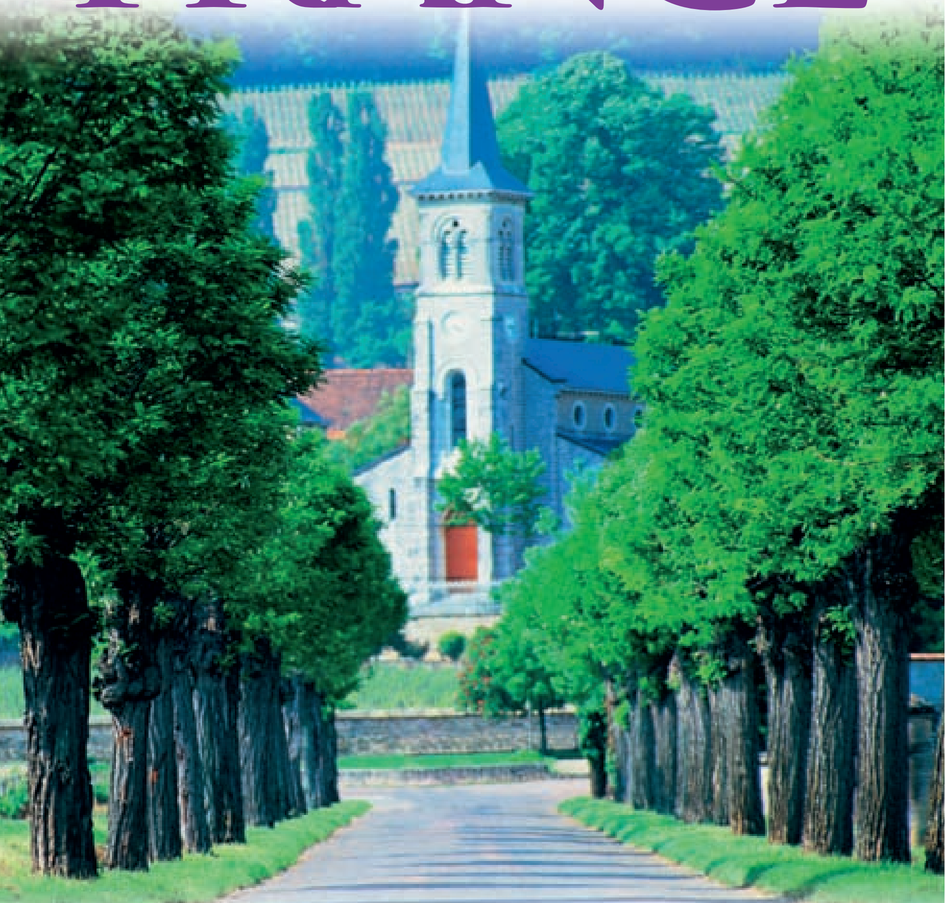

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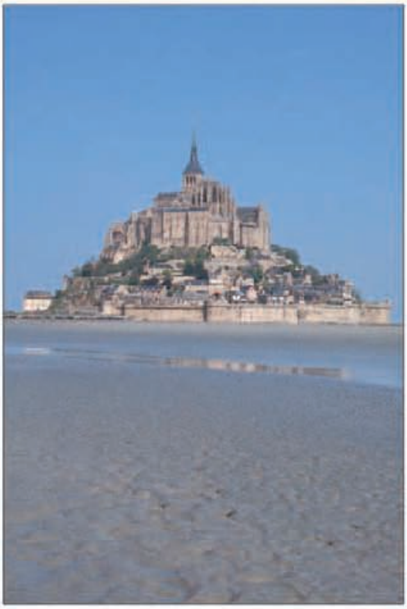

EYEWITNESS TRAVEL

FRANCE

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PROJECT EDITOR Rosemary Bailey
ART EDITOR Janis Utton
EDITORS Tanya Colbourne, Fiona Morgan,
Anna Streiffert, Celia Woolfrey
DESIGNERS Joy FitzSimmons, Erika Lang, Clare Sullivan
MAP CO-ORDINATORS Simon Farbrother, David Pugh
RESEARCHER Philippa Richmond

MAIN CONTRIBUTORS
John Ardagh, Rosemary Bailey, Judith Fayard, Lisa Gerard-Sharp, Colin Jones, Alister Kershaw, Alec Lobrano, Anthony Roberts, Alan Tillier, Nigel Tisdall

PHOTOGRAPHERS
Max Alexander, Neil Lukas, John Parker, Kim Sayer

ILLUSTRATORS
Stephen Conlin, John Lawrence, Maltings Partnership, John Woodcock

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Front cover main image: Aloxe-Corton, Burgundy

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◁ **Avenue of poplar trees, Parc de Marly, western outskirts of Paris**

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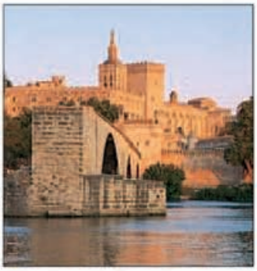


Palais des Papes, Avignon

HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

This guide helps you to get the most from your visit to France. It provides both expert recommendations and detailed practical information. *Introducing France* maps the country and sets it in its historical and cultural context. The 15 regional chapters, plus *Paris and Ile de France*, describe important sights, with maps, pictures, and illustrations. Throughout, features cover topics from food and wine to culture and beaches. Restaurant and hotel recommendations can be found in *Travelers' Needs*. The *Survival Guide* has tips on everything from the telephone system to transportation.

PARIS AND ILE DE FRANCE

The center of Paris has been divided into five sightseeing areas. Each has its own chapter, which opens with a list of the sights described. A further section covers Ile de France. All sights are numbered and plotted on an area map. The detailed information for each sight follows the map's numerical order, making sights easy to locate within the chapter.

All pages relating to Paris and Ile de France have green thumb tabs.

A locator map shows where you are in relation to other areas of the city center.

1 Area Map

For easy reference, the sights are numbered and located on a map. Sights in the city center are also shown on the Paris Street Finder *on pages 156–69.*

Sights at a Glance lists the chapter's sights by category: Churches, Museums, and Galleries; Historic Buildings, Squares, and Gardens.

2 Street-by-Street Map

This gives a bird's eye view of the key areas in each chapter.

A suggested route for a walk is shown in red.

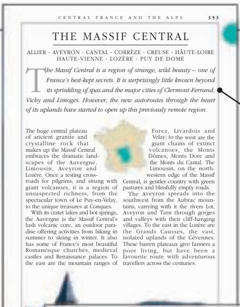
Stars indicate the sights that no visitor should miss.

3 Detailed information

The sights in Paris and Ile de France are described individually. Addresses, telephone numbers, opening hours, and information on admission charges and wheelchair access are also provided for each entry.

FRANCE AREA BY AREA

Apart from Paris and Ile de France, France has been divided into 15 regions, each of which has a separate chapter. The most interesting towns and places to visit have been numbered on a *Regional Map.*



THE MASSIF CENTRAL

ALLIER · AVEYRON · CANTAL · CORRÈZE · CREUSE · HÂUTE-LOIRE HAUTE-VIENNE · LOZÈRE · PUY DE DOME

1 Introduction

The landscape, history, and character of each region is described here, showing how the area has developed over the centuries and what it offers to the visitor today.

Exploring the Massif Central

Each area of France can be quickly identified by its color coding, shown on the inside front cover.

2 Regional Map

This shows the road network and gives an illustrated overview of the whole region. All interesting places to visit are numbered and there are also useful tips on getting around the region by car and train.

3 Detailed information

All the important towns and other places to visit are described individually. They are listed in order, following the numbering on the Regional Map. *Within each town or city, there is detailed information on important buildings and other sights.*

Story boxes highlight noteworthy features of the top sights.

Conques

For all the top sights, a Visitors' Checklist provides the practical information you will need to plan your visit.

4 France's top sights

These are given two or more full pages. Historic buildings are dissected to reveal their interiors. The most interesting towns or city centers are shown in a bird's eye view, with sights picked out and described.

INTRODUCING FRANCE

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PUTTING FRANCE ON THE MAP 14–17
A PORTRAIT OF FRANCE 18–35
FRANCE THROUGH THE YEAR 36–41
THE HISTORY OF FRANCE 42–69

DISCOVERING FRANCE

Gothic detail from Le Nord region

The chapters of this book have been divided into 16 color-coded regions that reflect the diversity of France. These are based on the country's historical regions that were often defined by their geography and landscape as much as by their influence and power.

Each has developed its own special flavor: its own architecture, cuisine, customs, music, dress, dialect, and even language. The following pages give a taste of these areas and show you what there is to see and do.

Pyramide du Louvre in Paris, from across the fountain pools

PARIS AND THE ILE DE FRANCE

- **Fantastic art at the Louvre**
- **Café life *par excellence***
- **Captivating Versailles**

The pleasures of Paris can be picked off at leisure any time of the year. The **Louvre** *(see pp100–3)*, **Picasso Museum** *(see pp90–1)*, and **Pompidou Center** *(see pp92–3)* may be on some people's ideal itinerary, while others may want to scale the **Eiffel Tower** *(see p113)* and shop in the *grands boulevards*, or follow in the steps of the famous from **Montmartre** *(see pp132–3)* to the **Père Lachaise Cemetery** *(see p135)*. Whatever your interest, there are cafés and brasseries to soak up the atmosphere, particularly on the **Left Bank** *(see pp116–127)* and in the **Marais** *(see pp80–93)*. For a day excursion, there are plenty of châteaux to visit, none more exalted than Louis XIV's fabulous palace at **Versailles** *(see pp168–71)*.

Les Deux Magots, one of Paris's most famous cafés

LE NORD AND PICARDY

- **Bustling Channel ports**
- **Lofty Gothic cathedrals**
- **Lille art collection**

The countryside north of Paris undulates toward Flanders and to the cliffs and sandy beaches around the Channel ports of **Dunkerque** *(see p197)*, **Calais** *(see pp196–7)*, and **Boulogne-sur-Mer** *(see p196)*. You can try your luck at the races, at **Chantilly** *(see pp204–5)* and **Le Touquet** *(see p196)*, or go to the lakes and woodland of the **Valley of the Somme** *(see p199)*, a name synonymous with the fatal trench warfare of World War I. High spots are the great Gothic cathedrals, such as **Amiens** *(see p200)*, the largest in France, and the city of **Lille** *(see p198)*, which has one of the best art galleries in the country.

CHAMPAGNE

- **Sparkling Champagne houses**
- **Royal Reims**
- **Gothic churches in Troyes**

Heidsieck Champagne label

Champagne means only one thing: sparkling white wine. Visit the producers' chalk caves in **Épernay** *(see p211)* and the premises of the *grandes marques* in **Reims** *(see pp210–1)*, where you will also find a great slice of French history in **Reims Cathedral** *(see p212)*. **Troyes** *(see pp216–7)*, the region's former capital, is a delightful town of many Gothic churches, while the castle keep at **Chaumont** *(see p217)* has echoes of its former residents, the Counts of Champagne. On the wild side is the **Vallée de la Meuse** *(see p214)* in the rocky Ardennes, while the region around **Lac du Der-Chantecog** *(see p215)* is known for its half-timbered churches.

◁ *The Pont du Gard, Nîmes,* by Hubert Robert

ALSACE AND LORRAINE

- **Alsace Wine Route**
- **Picturesque half-timbered towns**
- **Strasbourg, crossroads of Europe**

Abutting Germany and Switzerland, this is a delightful, gentle rural area of vineyards and orchards, and pretty, half-timbered villages and towns such as **Colmar** *(see p227)*, best seen along the 110-mile (180-km) **Route du Vin** *(see pp232–3)*. The **Vosges** mountains *(see p225)* attract skiers, and nearby is the **Gérardmer lake** *(see p225)* for summer water sports. The region is full of forts and castles, including the romantic **Château du Haut-Koenigsbourg** *(see pp228–9)*. The main town is **Strasbourg** *(see pp230–1)*.

The old town of Strasbourg, best explored on its pretty waterways

NORMANDY

- **D-Day beaches**
- **Cider and Calvados**
- **Magnificent Mont-St-Michel**

Visit Claude Monet's garden at **Giverny** *(see p266)* and see the lily pond and bridge just as he painted them. Normandy's blustery skies and billowing seas inspired the Impressionists who visited **Dieppe** *(see p263)*, **Le Havre** *(see p262)*, and pretty **Honfleur** *(see p262)*, while *tout* Paris used to decamp to the resorts of **Cabourg** *(see p255)*, **Deauville** *(see p255)* and **Trouville** *(see p255)*. Their beaches are known for the World War II D-Day landings. Normandy's farmlands are renowned for their cider, Calvados, butter, and cheese. Don't miss the **Abbaye de Mont-St-Michel** *(see pp256–61)* or **Rouen Cathedral** *(see pp264–5)*.

Normandy's Mont-St-Michel, one of the most enchanting sights in France

BRITTANY

- **Sandy beaches**
- **Mysterious Carnac**
- **Delightful fishing ports**

In the far northwest, this Celtic corner of France is a land with a language and culture of its own. Buffeted by the Atlantic, its rocky shores and sandy beaches, peppered with picturesque fishing ports, make it a prime spot for family beach vacations. Prehistory sighs in the wind here, and megalithic sites abound, especially in the mysterious rock formations at **Carnac** *(see p278)*.

To steep yourself in Breton culture, visit **Quimper** *(see p274)*, eat crêpes, drink cider, and try to attend a *pardon*, a feast of a local saint, when traditional costumes are worn. They take place between March and October. Find out about them at the **Musée de Bretagne** *(see p285)* in the region's capital, Rennes.

THE LOIRE VALLEY

- **Fairytale Renaissance châteaux**
- **Chartres Cathedral**
- **Le Mans, motor racing**

The fabulous châteaux of the Loire capture all the elegance and culture of France. Here the French nobles lived out the Renaissance in style. Wines have made towns such as **Saumur** *(see p292)* famous. Historic centers include **Tours** *(see pp296–7)* and **Chartres** *(see pp307–311)*, which has stunning stained glass in its magnificent cathedral windows, and **Orléans** *(see pp312–3)*, saved from the English by Joan of Arc, who is celebrated in a 10-day festival leading up to the anniversary of the city's liberation on 8 May. To the north is **Le Mans** *(see p291)*, another lovely old town, best known for its motor racing circuit. The 24-hour race is held in June.

Château de Chenonceau in the Loire Valley, across the River Cher

Côte de Nuits vineyard in Burgundy, part of the Côte d'Or region

BURGUNDY AND FRANCHE-COMTE

- **Gastronomic paradise**
- **Impressive abbeys**
- **Fine trekking and skiing**

Burgundy is corpulent France, conjuring up *boeuf bourguignon* and delicious wines that are among the most expensive in the world. The Dukes of Burgundy's legacy is splendid **Dijon** *(see pp340–2)*, but the true architectural gem is the **Hôtel-Dieu** in Beaune *(see pp346–7)*. The wealth of the Church is evident in harmonious Romanesque churches and abbeys, especially **Vézelay** *(see pp336–7)*. **The Franche-Comté's** *(see pp349–51)* lakes, mountains, woods, and waterfalls are perfect for trekking, canoeing and skiing.

MASSIF CENTRAL

- **Wild, beautiful landscapes**
- **Dramatic Gorges du Tarn**
- **Treasures of Ste-Foy**

This is the place to go to enjoy the great outdoors. A plateau of extinct volcanoes, spas, and lakes, the landscape reaches dramatic heights in the **Gorges du Tarn** *(see pp370–1)*. The **Cévennes** *(see p353)*, one of the least populated parts of the country, is known for its wild flowers and birds of prey. Remote villages and ancient churches top hills and are tucked in valleys. The Abbaye de Ste-Foy in **Conques** *(see pp368–9)* has one of the most celebrated reliquaries in Christendom.

THE RHONE VALLEY AND FRENCH ALPS

- **Lyon's enticing *bouchons***
- **Grenoble and the ski slopes**
- **Elegant Evian-les-Bains**

The south of France begins at **Lyon** *(see pp380–1)*, France's second largest city, where the River Saône joins the River Rhône and the Mediterranean starts to scent the air. The commercial and military capital of Roman Gaul is now a gastronomic capital known for its *bouchons* (bistros) and local wines from **Beaujolais** *(see p377)* as well as the Rhône. Natural attractions in the region include the dramatic, cave-pocked **Ardèche** *(see pp384–5)* and, to the east, **Grenoble** *(see pp388–9)* and the Alps where you'll find the elegant spa town of **Evian-les-Bains** *(see p391)* beside Lac Léman.

Wine from the Rhône Valley

POITOU AND AQUITAINE

- **Marais Poitevin's canals**
- **Historic Poitiers**
- **Bordeaux wine châteaux**

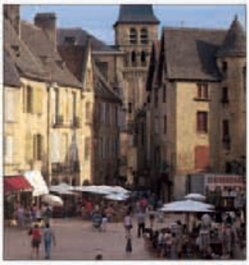
Set against a long coast of sandy beaches, this largely flat region runs from the port of **La Rochelle** *(see p416)* and the popular holiday island of **Île d'Oléron** *(see p417)* to the Basque country. When La Rochelle is busy in summer, escape to the **Marais Poitevin** *(see pp408–9)*, a network of lily-blanketed canals teeming with wildlife. There are two historic centers – **Poitiers** *(see pp412–3)*, whose cathedral has the oldest carved choir stalls in France, and **Bordeaux** *(see pp420–3)*, beside the River Garonne. The latter has been long known as a wine port serving the magnificent surrounding châteaux estates.

PERIGORD, QUERCY AND GASCONY

- **Sarlat Market**
- **Lascaux's famous caves**
- **Toulouse Space Park**

Cut by the majestic Dordogne, Lot, and Tarn rivers, this is bucolic, green France where water activities help to beat the summer sun. Every town has a weekly market brimming with local produce, such as *foie gras* and **Agen** *(see p440)* prunes. Best known is the Wednesday market in **Sarlat-la-Caneda** *(see pp432–3)*, though stunning architecture makes it worth a visit any day of the week.

Rocamadour *(see pp436–7)* and **Moissac** *(see pp442–3)* are other architectural high points, while prehistoric man has left his mark in the famous **Lascaux caves** *(see pp402–3)*. **Toulouse** *(see pp446–7)* is the major town. Try its sausages and visit the hi-tech Space Park.



Sarlat Market, famous for *foie gras* and walnuts

THE PYRENEES

- **Biarritz beaches**
- **Parc National des Pyrénées wildlife**
- **The shrine at Lourdes**

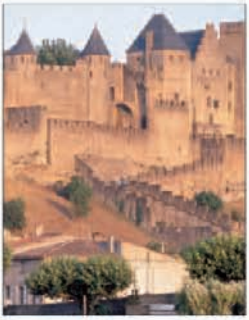
The Pyrenees mountain range stretches from the Atlantic to the Mediterranean, forming a natural border with Spain. On the Atlantic coast is the **Basque country** *(see p449)* where **Bayonne** *(see p452)* is known for its ham and **Biarritz** *(see p452)*, a surfers' town, is renowned for its bygone glories as the resort choice of kings. The **Parc National des Pyrénées** *(see pp460–1)* is at the heart of the mountains which are spectacular for walking and trekking. Skiers come in winter. **Lourdes** *(see pp458–9)* brings pilgrims all year round.

Flowers, butterflies, animals, and birds brighten the Pyrenees trails

LANGUEDOC-ROUSSILLON

- **Collioure, the artists' resort**
- **Carcassonne, fairytale walled town**
- **Pont du Gard, a Roman triumph**

These are sunny, rolling lands of olives, vines, cypress trees, and sunflowers, where old farm buildings have been baked by the sun. The Pyrenees reach the Mediterranean here, on the **Côte Vermeille** *(see p482)*, where the prettiest resort is **Collioure** *(see p483)*, long familiar to artists. To the north is **Carcassonne** *(see pp488–9)*, a dreamy fortified town that has been perfectly restored. Romantics might also want to seek out **Montségur** *(see p463)* as the last stronghold of the persecuted Cathars. **Nîmes** *(see pp496–7)* was a major Roman city with a well-preserved amphitheater and an astonishing aqueduct, the **Pont du Gard** *(see p495)*. It was the highest bridge the Romans ever built.



The fairytale sight of Carcassonne, restored in the 19th century

PROVENCE AND THE CÔTE D'AZUR

- **The French Riviera**
- **Cannes' ritzy Film Festival**
- **Monte-Carlo Casino**

St-Tropez *(see p516)*, **Nice** *(see pp526–7)*, **Menton** *(see p529)* – the French Riviera is the most fabulous waterfront in the world. Admire top yachts in **Antibes** *(see p521)*, catch the rising stars at **Cannes' film festival** *(see p520)*, and break the bank in **Monte-Carlo** *(see pp530–1)*. There is plenty to do all year round so it's best to avoid August when it can be incredibly busy. Away from the coast there are glorious ancient towns, from **Avignon** *(see p503)*, where popes built a palace, and **Aix** *(see p511)*, where good King Renée ruled, to Roman **Arles** *(see pp508–9)* and the cowboy country of the **Camargue** *(see pp510–1)*.

CORSICA

- **Myrtle-scented maquis**
- **Beautiful sandy beaches**
- **Fortified towns**

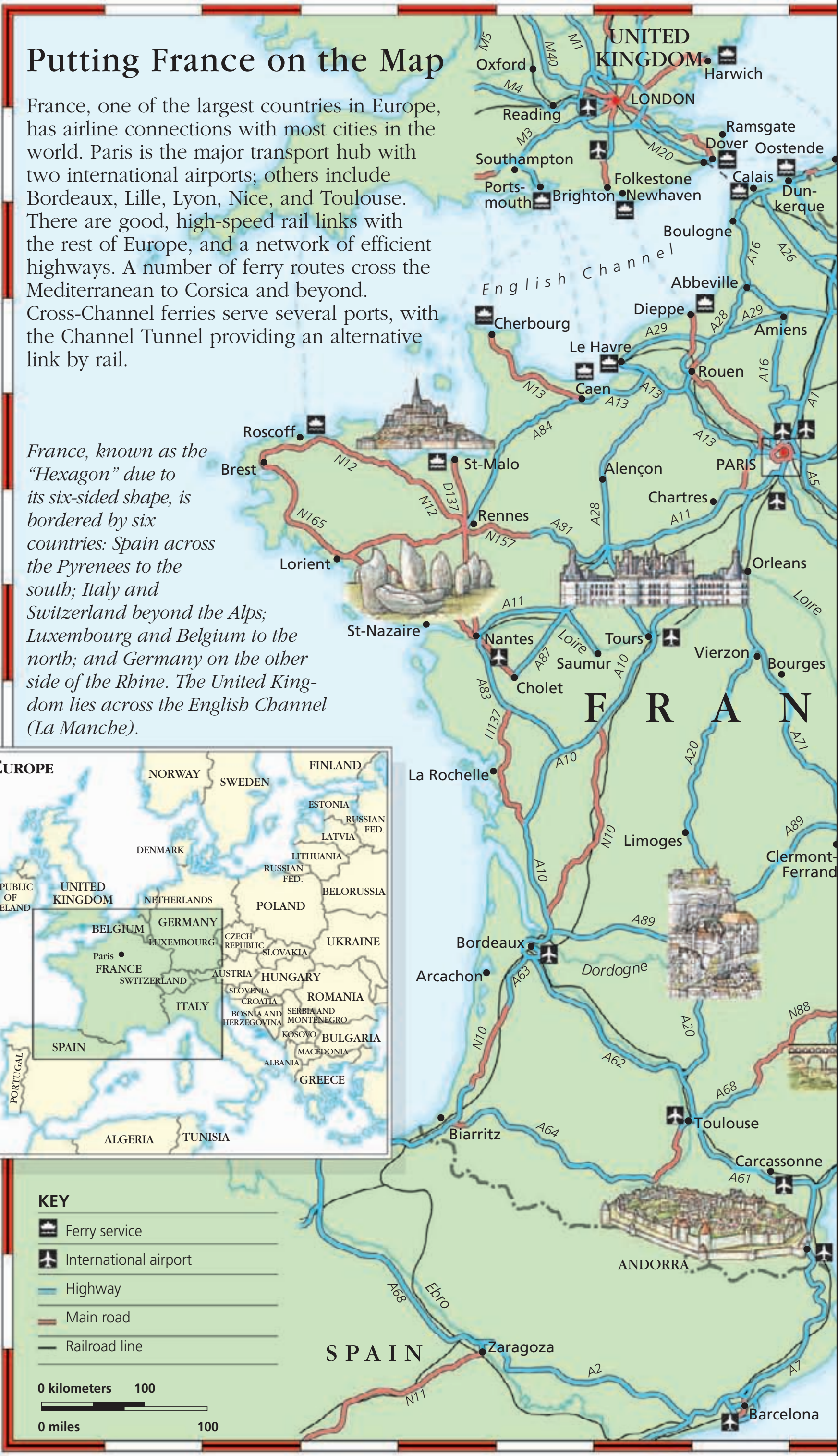
A mountainous island with coves and sandy beaches, Corsica is the place to hike, especially in spring, when the aromatic maquis puts on its best show. On the coast there are fortified towns such as **Bonifacio** *(see p543)* and **Porto** *(see p541)*, set in a magical bay. Napoleon Bonaparte was born in **Ajaccio** *(see p543)*. Find out about the island's history and customs in the Musée de la Corse in **Corte** *(see p540)*, which is a good base for exploring enchanting, remote Castagmiccia.

St-Tropez harbor, the most glamorous resort on the Provence coast

Putting France on the Map

France, one of the largest countries in Europe, has airline connections with most cities in the world. Paris is the major transport hub with two international airports; others include Bordeaux, Lille, Lyon, Nice, and Toulouse. There are good, high-speed rail links with the rest of Europe, and a network of efficient highways. A number of ferry routes cross the Mediterranean to Corsica and beyond. Cross-Channel ferries serve several ports, with the Channel Tunnel providing an alternative link by rail.

France, known as the "Hexagon" due to its six-sided shape, is bordered by six countries: Spain across the Pyrenees to the south; Italy and Switzerland beyond the Alps; Luxembourg and Belgium to the north; and Germany on the other side of the Rhine. The United Kingdom lies across the English Channel (La Manche).


UNITED KINGDOM
LONDON
Oxford
Reading
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Southampton
Portsmouth
Brighton
Newhaven
Folkestone
Ramsgate
Dover
Oostende
Calais
Dunkerque
Boulogne
M5
M40
M1
M4
M3
M20
English Channel
Abbeville
Dieppe
Amiens
Cherbourg
Le Havre
Rouen
Caen
A16
A26
A28
A29
A13
A1
A84
N13
Roscoff
Brest
St-Malo
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Rennes
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PARIS
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KEY

- ⛴ Ferry service
- ✈ International airport
- — Highway
- — Main road
- — Railroad line

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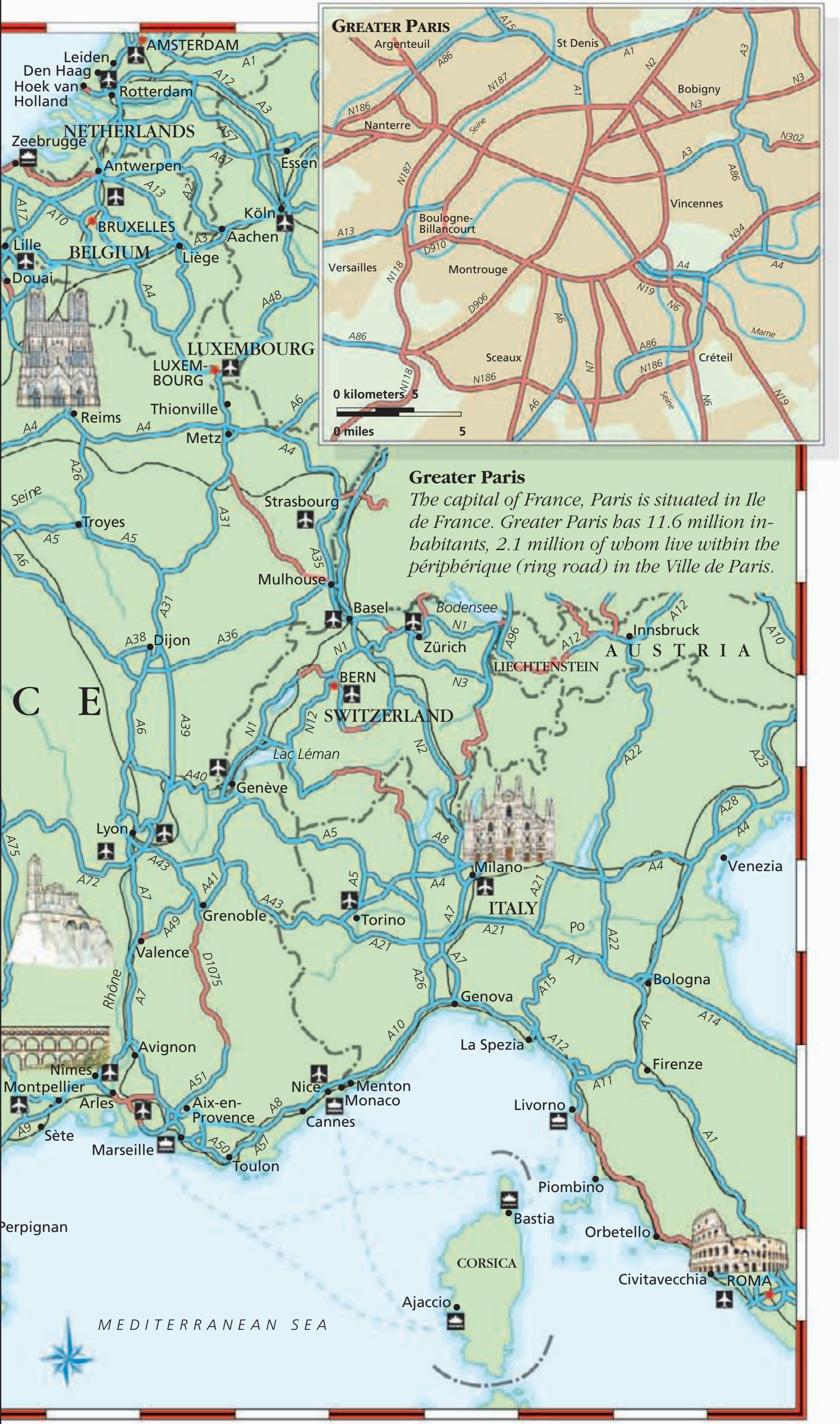
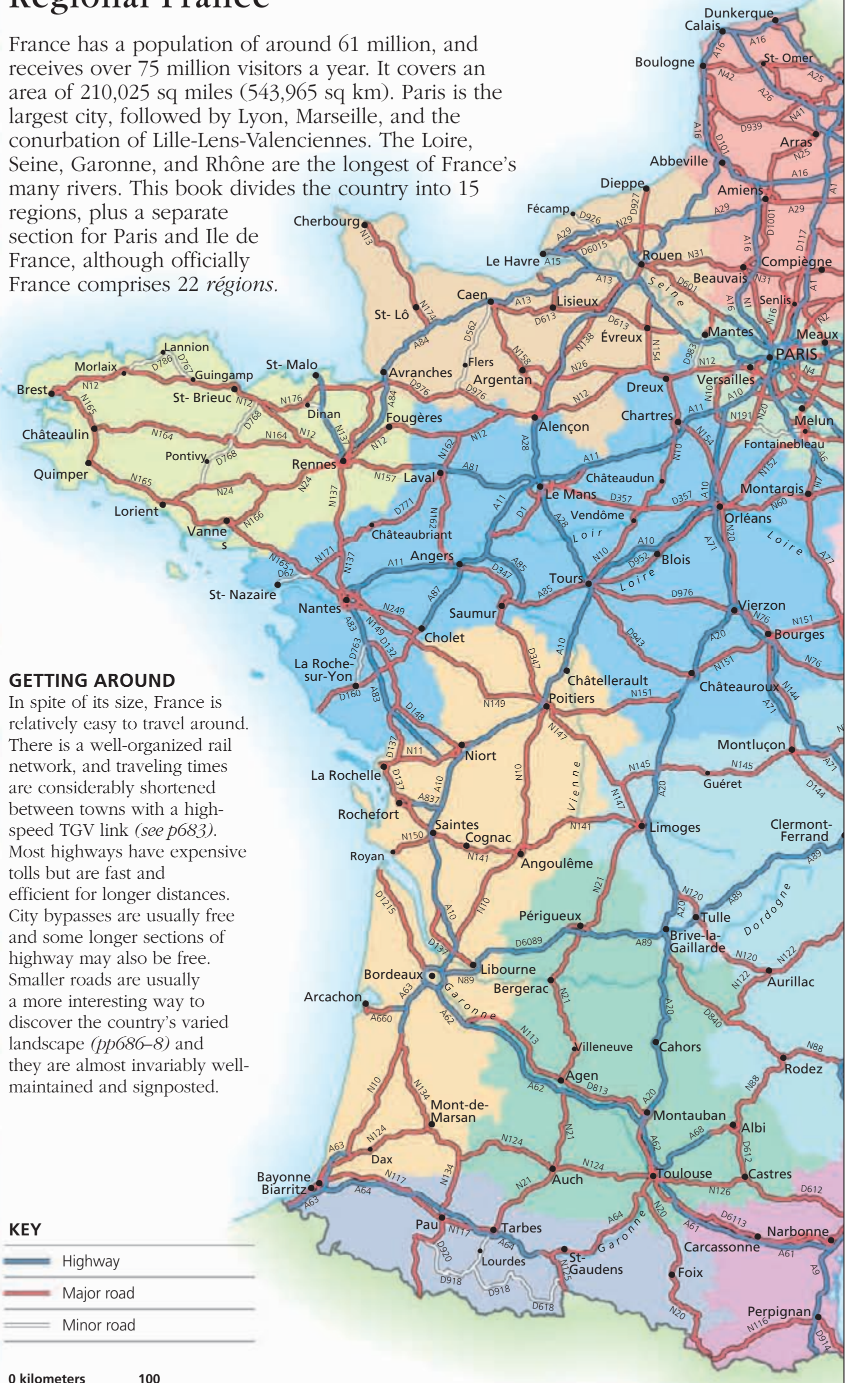

GREATER PARIS
Argenteuil
St Denis
Bobigny
Nanterre
Vincennes
Boulogne-Billancourt
Versailles
Montrouge
Sceaux
Créteil
Seine
Marne
A1
A3
A4
A6
A13
A15
A86
N1
N2
N3
N7
N19
N34
N118
N186
N187
N302
D906
D910
0 kilometers 5
0 miles 5
AMSTERDAM
Leiden
Den Haag
Hoek van Holland
Rotterdam
NETHERLANDS
Zeebrugge
Antwerpen
Essen
BRUXELLES
Köln
Aachen
Lille
BELGIUM
Liège
Douai
LUXEMBOURG
LUXEM-BOURG
Thionville
Reims
Metz
Seine
Troyes
Strasbourg
Mulhouse
Basel
Bodensee
Zürich
Innsbruck
AUSTRIA
LIECHTENSTEIN
Dijon
C E
BERN
SWITZERLAND
Lac Léman
Genève
Lyon
Milano
ITALY
Venezia
Grenoble
Torino
Po
Valence
Rhône
Bologna
Genova
La Spezia
Firenze
Avignon
Nîmes
Montpellier
Arles
Aix-en-Provence
Nice
Menton
Monaco
Cannes
Livorno
Sète
Marseille
Toulon
Piombino
Bastia
Perpignan
Orbetello
CORSICA
Civitavecchia
ROMA
Ajaccio
MEDITERRANEAN SEA

Greater Paris

The capital of France, Paris is situated in Ile de France. Greater Paris has 11.6 million inhabitants, 2.1 million of whom live within the périphérique (ring road) in the Ville de Paris.

Regional France

France has a population of around 61 million, and receives over 75 million visitors a year. It covers an area of 210,025 sq miles (543,965 sq km). Paris is the largest city, followed by Lyon, Marseille, and the conurbation of Lille-Lens-Valenciennes. The Loire, Seine, Garonne, and Rhône are the longest of France's many rivers. This book divides the country into 15 regions, plus a separate section for Paris and Ile de France, although officially France comprises 22 *régions*.


Dunkerque
Calais
Boulogne
St- Omer
Arras
Abbeville
Amiens
Dieppe
Fécamp
Cherbourg
Le Havre
Rouen
Compiègne
Beauvais
Senlis
Caen
Lisieux
St- Lô
Seine
Évreux
Mantes
Meaux
PARIS
Lannion
Morlaix
Guingamp
St- Malo
Flers
Avranches
Argentan
Brest
St- Brieuc
Dinan
Dreux
Versailles
Fougères
Alençon
Chartres
Melun
Châteaulin
Pontivy
Rennes
Fontainebleau
Quimper
Laval
Châteaudun
Le Mans
Montargis
Lorient
Vendôme
Orléans
Vannes
Châteaubriant
Loir
Loire
Angers
Blois
St- Nazaire
Tours
Nantes
Saumur
Vierzon
Cholet
Bourges
La Roche-sur-Yon
Châtellerault
Poitiers
Châteauroux
Niort
Montluçon
La Rochelle
Guéret
Vienne
Rochefort
Limoges
Clermont-Ferrand
Saintes
Cognac
Royan
Angoulême
Périgueux
Tulle
Brive-la-Gaillarde
Dordogne
Bordeaux
Libourne
Aurillac
Bergerac
Arcachon
Garonne
Villeneuve
Cahors
Rodez
Agen
Mont-de-Marsan
Montauban
Albi
Dax
Bayonne
Biarritz
Auch
Toulouse
Castres
Pau
Tarbes
Narbonne
Carcassonne
Lourdes
St-Gaudens
Foix
Perpignan

KEY

Highway

Major road

Minor road

0 kilometers 100

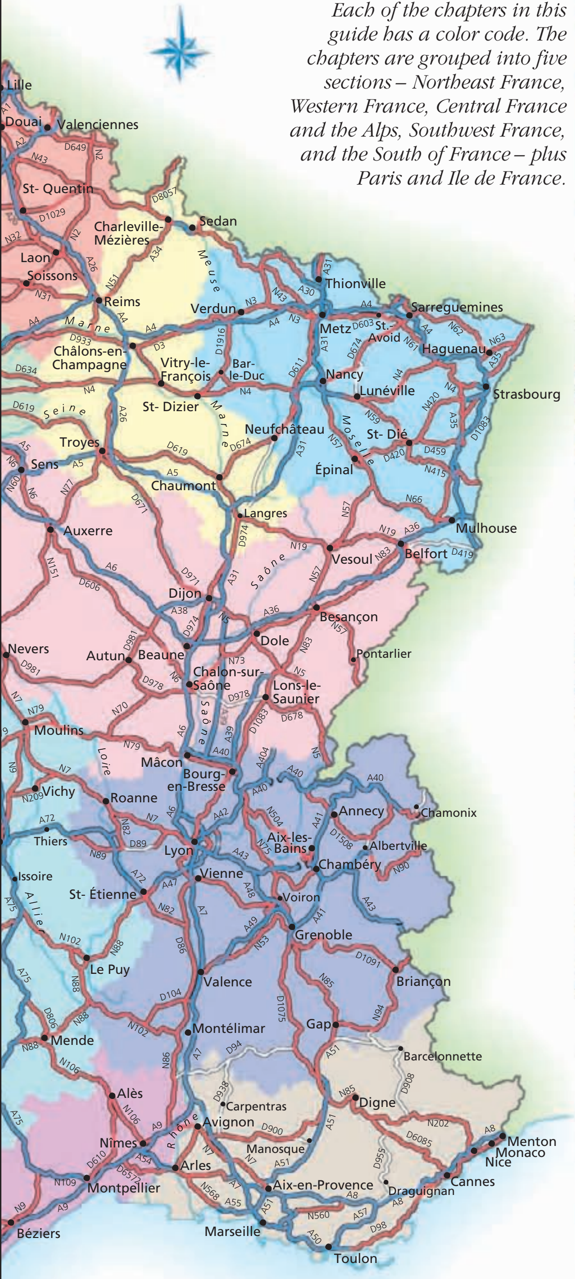
0 miles 100

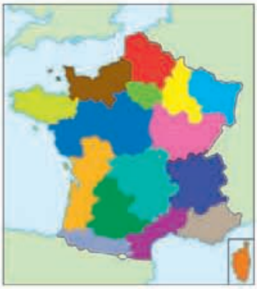
GETTING AROUND

In spite of its size, France is relatively easy to travel around. There is a well-organized rail network, and traveling times are considerably shortened between towns with a high-speed TGV link *(see p683)*. Most highways have expensive tolls but are fast and efficient for longer distances. City bypasses are usually free and some longer sections of highway may also be free. Smaller roads are usually a more interesting way to discover the country's varied landscape *(pp686–8)* and they are almost invariably well-maintained and signposted.

Eyewitness France Regions

Each of the chapters in this guide has a color code. The chapters are grouped into five sections – Northeast France, Western France, Central France and the Alps, Southwest France, and the South of France – plus Paris and Ile de France.


Lille
Douai
Valenciennes
St- Quentin
Charleville-Mézières
Sedan
Laon
Soissons
Reims
Meuse
Verdun
Thionville
Sarreguemines
Metz
St.-Avoid
Haguenau
Marne
Châlons-en-Champagne
Vitry-le-François
Bar-le-Duc
Nancy
Lunéville
Strasbourg
Seine
St- Dizier
Marne
Neufchâteau
Moselle
St- Dié
Troyes
Sens
Épinal
Chaumont
Langres
Mulhouse
Auxerre
Belfort
Saône
Vesoul
Dijon
Besançon
Dole
Nevers
Autun
Beaune
Pontarlier
Chalon-sur-Saône
Lons-le-Saunier
Saône
Moulins
Loire
Mâcon
Bourg-en-Bresse
Vichy
Roanne
Annecy
Chamonix
Thiers
Lyon
Aix-les-Bains
Albertville
Chambéry
Issoire
Vienne
Allier
St- Étienne
Voiron
Grenoble
Le Puy
Valence
Briançon
Montélimar
Gap
Mende
Barcelonnette
Alès
Carpentras
Digne
Rhône
Avignon
Nîmes
Manosque
Menton
Monaco
Nice
Arles
Cannes
Aix-en-Provence
Draguignan
Montpellier
Marseille
Béziers
Toulon



KEY TO COLOR-CODING

🟩 Paris and Ile de France

Northeast France

🟥 Le Nord and Picardy

🟨 Champagne

🟦 Alsace and Lorraine

Western France

🟫 Normandy

🟩 Brittany

🟦 The Loire Valley

Central France and the Alps

🟪 Burgundy and Franche-Comté

🟩 Massif Central

🟦 The Rhône Valley and French Alps

Southwest France

🟧 Poitou and Aquitaine

🟩 Périgord, Quercy, and Gascony

🟦 The Pyrenees

The South of France

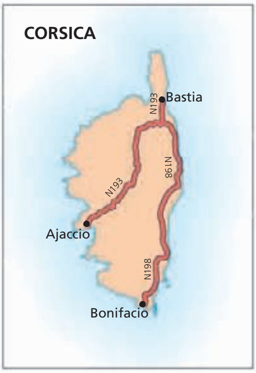
🟪 Languedoc-Roussillon

🟫 Provence and the Côte d'Azur

🟧 Corsica

Corsica

Situated 120 miles (193 km) from the Côte d'Azur, Corsica can be reached by ferry or air. Covering an area of 3,350 sq miles (8,680 sq km), it is the fourth largest island in the Mediterranean.


CORSICA
Bastia
N193
N198
Ajaccio
N193
N198
Bonifacio

CAFE
PIZZA SNAC
MENU
CAFÉ DE PA

A PORTRAIT OF FRANCE

The French are convinced that their way of life is best, and that their country is the most civilized on earth. Many millions of visitors agree with them. The food and wine are justly celebrated. French culture, literature, art, cinema, and architecture can be both profound and provocative. Whether cerebral, sensual, or sportive, France is a country where anyone might feel at home.

Marianne, symbol of France

France's landscape ranges from mountain plateaux to lush farmland, traditional villages to chic boulevards. Its regional identities are equally diverse. The country belongs to both northern and southern Europe, and encompasses Brittany with its Celtic maritime heritage, the Mediterranean sunbelt, Germanic Alsace-Lorraine, and the hardy mountain regions of the Auvergne and the Pyrenees. Paris remains the linchpin, with its famously brusque citizens and intense tempo. Other cities range from the industrial conglomeration of Lille in the north, to Marseille, the biggest port on the Mediterranean. The differences between north and south, country and city are well-entrenched, indeed cherished. Advances such as the TGV (high-speed train), Internet, and cell phone technology have helped reduce distance (both physical and emotional) yet have simultaneously provoked an opposite reaction: as life in France becomes more city-based and industrialized, so the desire grows to safeguard the old, traditional ways and to value rural life.

The idea of life in the country – *douceur de vivre* (the Good Life), tables set in the sun for the wine and anecdotes to flow – is as seductive as ever for residents and visitors

Château de Saumur, one of the Loire's most romantic and complete castles

◁ **Café life in St-Tropez, one of the country's many pleasures** alike. Nevertheless, the rural way of life has been changing. Whereas in 1945 one person in three worked in farming, today it is only one in 25. France's main exports used to be luxury goods such as perfumes and Cognac; today, they have been overtaken by cars, aircraft, nuclear power stations, and telecommunications equipment.

The popular scooter

People remain committed to their roots, and often retain a place in the country for vacations or retirement. On average, more French people have second homes than any other nationality; and in many areas, such as Provence, the dying villages have found a new life as chic summer residences for Parisians. Many artists and artisans now live and work in the country; and entrepreneurs have set up factory workshops there, more feasible in the age of the Internet.

Chanel chic

COCO
CHANEL

The decline in the influence of the Catholic Church has resulted in social changes. Today only 9 percent of people attend mass regularly. Many couples live together before marriage, and are allowed the same tax status as married couples. Abortion is now legal.

Feminism in France has quite a different look than in Anglo-Saxon countries. French feminists are unwilling to condemn frivolous feminity and sex-appeal. As EU citizens, women in France have full legal equality with men, but French attitudes remain traditional and a flirtatious gallantry is the norm. The election of Edith Cresson in 1991 as France's first woman prime minister may have appeared a milestone, but her unpopularity and the 1999 corruption case against her as an EU Commissioner arguably held back the cause of women's equality in French politics. Ségolène Royal re-established a prominent political role for women when she contested the 2007 presidential elections against Nicolas Sarkozy and won 47 percent of the votes.

SOCIAL CUSTOMS AND POLITICS

French social life, except between close friends, has always been marked by formality – handshaking, the use of titles, the preference for the formal *vous* rather than the intimate *tu*. However, this is changing among the younger generation, who now call you by your

The May 1968 disturbances, a catalyst for profound change in France

Farming in Alsace-Lorraine

first name. Standards of dress have become much more informal too, though the French still dress well.

Formality lingers on, however, and France remains very legalistic – whether you are buying a house or exporting an antique. But the French are insouciant about their famous red tape. Rules and laws are there to be ingeniously evaded, twisted, or made more human. This sport of avoiding cumbersome bureaucracy has a name of its own, *le système D*, to be accompanied with a shrug and a smile.

Charles de Gaulle

Since the end of the Cold War, the sharp Left/Right divisions in French society have been replaced by pragmatic centrism. Over a period of 14 years, President François Mitterrand – elected in 1981 as the head of a Socialist Communist coalition – steadily moved toward a more central-focused political agenda. In 1995, he was replaced by Jacques Chirac who promised right-wing policies. He, too, moved to the center. By the 2002 presidential elections, immigration and security fears, broken electoral promises, and political corruption had caused widespread disenchantment and a swing to the Front National. The result was the elimiation of Socialist Lionel Jospin in the first round and the election of Chirac by default in the second. Further electoral discontent was revealed by the rejection of the European Constitution in 2005.

In 2007, Chirac's Deputy Prime Minister, Nicolas Sarkozy, won the presidency by addressing public fears and promising an end to political corruption. He set out clearly what he would do if elected, and has largely stuck to his promises. Since election, Sarkozy has notably forged a closer relationship with the US, pushed through the endorsement of the EU Treaty of Lisbon, re-engaged France in the European Union, and opened up his government to ministers from the Left.

CULTURE AND THE ARTS

Culture is taken seriously in France, and writers, intellectuals, artists, and fashion designers are held in high social esteem. As a result, the state finances

Designer Thierry Mugler at the Paris collections

a large network of provincial arts centers, and has traditionally given subsidies which have allowed experimentation in art and design. The French remain justly proud of their own cinematic tradition and are determined to defend it against pressures from Hollywood. Other activities – from the music industry to the French language itself – are subject to the same protectionist attitudes.

Avant-garde art and literature and modern architecture all enjoy strong patronage in France. Some of the more exciting architectural projects range from the striking modern buildings in Paris – the Louvre pyramid and La Grande Arche at La Défense – to the post-modern housing developments of Nîmes, Montpellier, and Marseille in the south.

Traditional Breton costumes, worn for festivals and *pardons*

MODERN LIFE

While one half of the French were heralding in the new millennium in true Gallic style, the other half were plunged into darkness caused by the worst storms ever to hit Europe. This is an extreme illustration of French ambivalence towards modernism. France's agro-business is one of the most modern in the world, but the peasant farmer is deeply revered. France hankers after a leading role in the world, yet the country effectively closes down for the whole of August, when the French take to the roads and coastal resorts … of France! However, two recent changes have somewhat forced the pace: the Internet, which France has embraced keenly, and the Euro, which, in one fell swoop, has swept away Europe's oldest decimalized currency, the Franc. The

A view through the base of La Grande Arche, part of the huge business complex on the edge of Paris

The traditional game of *boules or pétanque*, still extremely popular – especially in the south

Southern produce: melons, peaches, and apricots

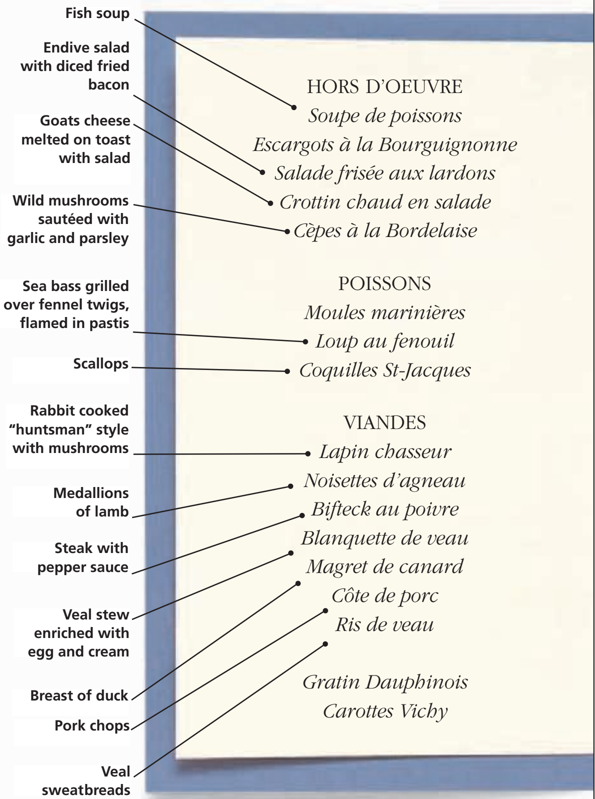
French are enthusiastic, discerning consumers. Even small towns have chic clothes stores, and street markets bring in local produce. France also has Europe's largest hypermarkets (superstores), which have been steadily ousting the local corner store or grocery. These are very French in what they sell: a long delicatessen counter may have a wonderful display of cheeses and *charcuterie,* while the range of fresh vegetables and fruit is a tribute to their role in French cuisine.

However, under modern pressures, eating habits have been polarizing in a curious way. The French used to eat well every day as a matter of course. Today many are in a hurry, and for most meals of the week they will eat simply – either a quick steak or pasta dish at home, or a snack in town (hence the wave of fast-food places that have sprung up, in defiance of French tradition). But meals still remain an important part of French culture – not just for the food and wines, but also for the pleasure of lengthy meals and good conversation around a table, among family or friends. They will reserve their gastronomy for the once-or-twice-a-week special occasion, or the big family Sunday lunch, an important French ritual. It is at these times that the French zest for life really comes into its own.

Remote farm – a nostalgic reminder of rural life

The Classic French Menu

The traditional French meal consists of at least three courses. *Les entrées* or *hors d'oeuvre* (first courses or appetizers) include soups, egg dishes, salads, or *charcuterie*, such as sliced sausage or hams. There may be a separate fish course before the main course. Otherwise, *les plats* (main courses) will be a choice of meat and fish dishes, often served with a sauce and accompanied by potatoes, rice, or pasta and vegetables. The cheese course comes before the dessert. Desserts may include sorbets, fruit tarts, and creamy or chocolate concoctions. A fixed-price menu is the cheapest option. For more information on French restaurants, see pp596–9.



HORS D'OEUVRE

Soupe de poissons

Escargots à la Bourguignonne

Salade frisée aux lardons

Crottin chaud en salade

Cèpes à la Bordelaise

POISSONS

Moules marinières

Loup au fenouil

Coquilles St-Jacques

VIANDES

Lapin chasseur

Noisettes d'agneau

Bifteck au poivre

Blanquette de veau

Magret de canard

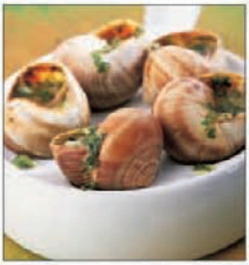
Côte de porc

Ris de veau

Gratin Dauphinois

Carottes Vichy

Fish soup
Endive salad with diced fried bacon
Goats cheese melted on toast with salad
Wild mushrooms sautéed with garlic and parsley
Sea bass grilled over fennel twigs, flamed in pastis
Scallops
Rabbit cooked "huntsman" style with mushrooms
Medallions of lamb
Steak with pepper sauce
Veal stew enriched with egg and cream
Breast of duck
Pork chops
Veal sweatbreads



Escargots à la Bourguignonne *In Bourgogne, snails are served in their shells with parsley and garlic butter.*

Moules marinières *In this classic dish, mussels are cooked in dry white wine with shallots and parsley.*

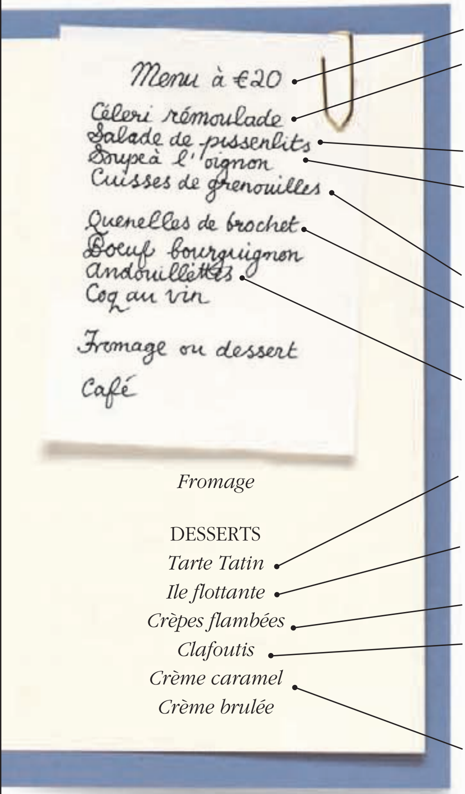
Gratin Dauphinois *Layers of potato are covered in cream, topped with Gruyère cheese and slowly baked.*

Carottes Vichy *Cooked in Vichy water with sugar, carrots take on a delicious, sweet glaze. They are served garnished with parsley.*

BREAKFAST

The French rarely eat cereal, eggs, or meat for breakfast; assorted breads, spread with butter and jams, are their morning choice. These include *croissants* (flaky, buttery crescent-shaped pastries); a piece of *baguette* (the classic long thin loaf); *pain au chocolat* (an oblong of croissant dough rolled round a tablet of chocolate, then baked); and *brioche* (an airy, egg-enriched yeast bread or roll). They are accompanied by coffee or tea, or hot chocolate for children. Hotels will usually offer fresh fruit juice, too. The most common form of coffee at breakfast is *café au lait*, espresso served with warm milk.

Typical French breakfast selection



Menu à €20
Céleri rémoulade
Salade de pissenlits
Soupe à l'oignon
Cuisses de grenouilles
Quenelles de brochet
Boeuf bourguignon
Andouillettes
Coq au vin
Fromage ou dessert
Café

Fromage

DESSERTS
Tarte Tatin
Ile flottante
Crèpes flambées
Clafoutis
Crème caramel
Crème brulée

Fixed-price menu of the day
Grated celeriac in a piquant mayonnaise
Dandelion-leaf salad
Dark, rich onion soup topped with bread and grilled cheese
Frogs' legs
Light, fluffy poached pike dumplings
Small tripe sausages, usually grilled
Upside-down baked apple tart
Meringues floating in a creamy sauce
Sugared crêpes flamed in liqueur
Baked fruit and batter dessert, often made with cherries
Egg custard with a caramel sauce

Boeuf Bourguignon *Beef is cooked in red Burgundy wine with bacon, baby onions, and button mushrooms.*

Coq au vin *A male chicken is flamed in brandy, then stewed in wine with button mushrooms and onions.*

Fromage *Any good French restaurant will take pride in offering a good range of perfectly matured regional cheeses, including, as available, cows', ewes', and goats' milk, blue, soft, and hard varieties.*

Crème Brulée *This rich, creamy custard is covered with brown sugar, grilled to form a crisp topping.*

The Wine of France

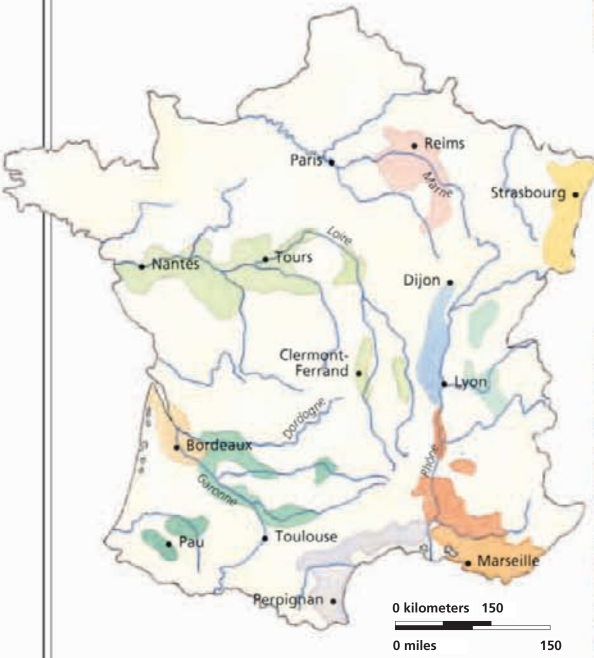
Picker's hod

Winemaking in France dates back to pre-Roman times, although it was the Romans who disseminated the culture of the vine and the practice of winemaking throughout the country. The range, quality, and reputation of the fine wines of Bordeaux, Burgundy, the Rhône, and Champagne in particular have made them role models the world over. France's everyday wines can be highly enjoyable too, with plenty of good value wines now emerging from the southern regions.

Traditional vineyard cultivation

WINE REGIONS

Each of the 10 principal wine-producing regions has its own identity, based on grape varieties, climate and *terroir* (soil). *Appellation contrôlée* laws guarantee a wine's origins and production methods.

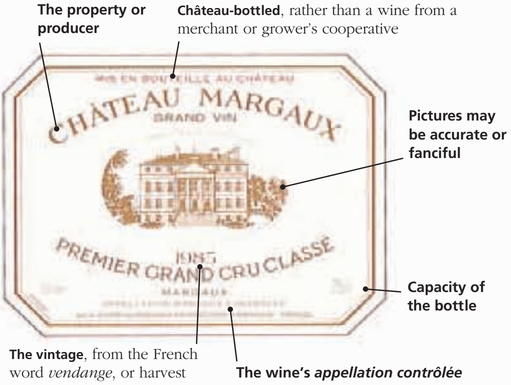

Reims
Paris
Marne
Strasbourg
Loire
Nantes
Tours
Dijon
Clermont-Ferrand
Lyon
Dordogne
Bordeaux
Garonne
Rhône
Pau
Toulouse
Marseille
Perpignan
0 kilometers 150
0 miles 150

KEY

- 🟧 Bordeaux
- 🟦 Burgundy
- 🟥 Champagne
- 🟨 Alsace
- 🟩 Loire
- 🟧 Provence
- ⬜ Jura and Savoie
- 🟩 The Southwest
- ⬜ Languedoc-Roussillon
- 🟧 Rhône

HOW TO READ A WINE LABEL

Even the simplest label will identify the wine and provide a key to its quality. It will bear the name of the wine and its producer, its vintage if there is one, and whether it comes from a strictly defined area (*appellation contrôlée* or VDQS) or is a more general *vin de pays* or *vin de table*. It may also have a regional grading, as with the *crus classés* in Bordeaux. The shape and color of the bottle is also a guide to the kind of wine it contains. Green glass is often used since this helps to protect the wine from light.


MIS EN BOUTEILLE AU CHATEAU
CHATEAU MARGAUX
GRAND VIN
PREMIER GRAND CRU CLASSE
1985
MARGAUX

The property or producer

Château-bottled, rather than a wine from a merchant or grower's cooperative

Pictures may be accurate or fanciful

Capacity of the bottle

The vintage, from the French word *vendange*, or harvest

The wine's *appellation contrôlée*

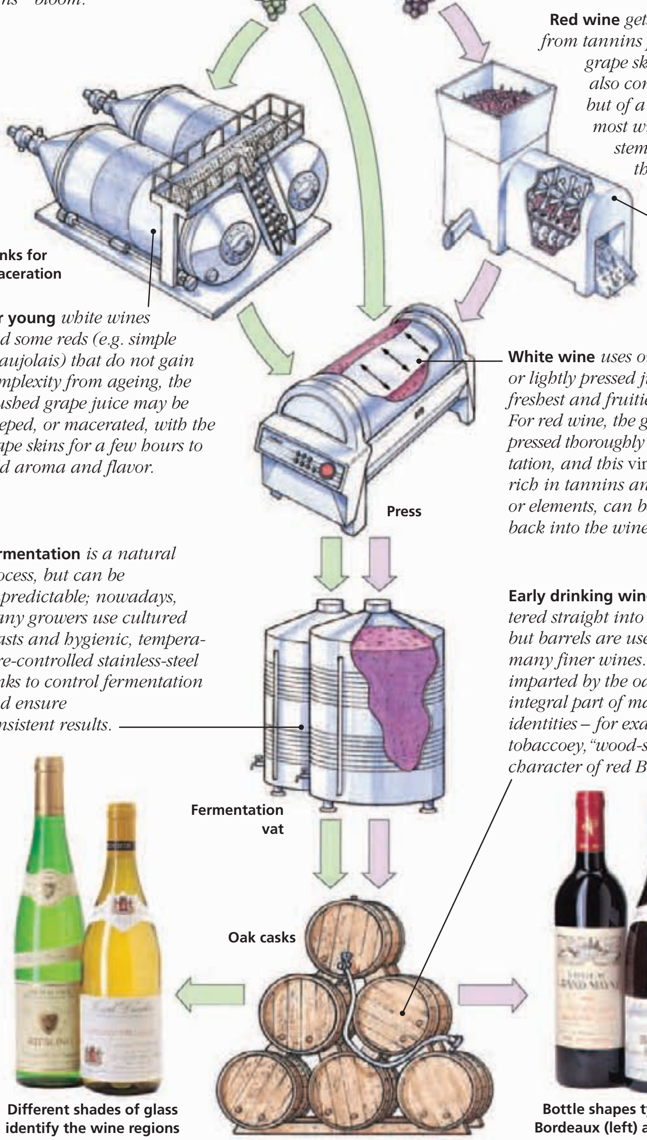
HOW WINE IS MADE

Wine is the product of the juice of freshly picked grapes, after natural or cultured yeasts have converted the grape sugars into alcohol during the fermentation process. The yeasts, or lees, are normally filtered out before bottling.

WHITE WINE
RED WINE

Newly harvested grapes, *whether red or white, are first lightly crushed to bring the sugar-rich juices into contact with the yeasts in the grape skins' "bloom."*

Old wine press



Red wine *gets its backbone from tannins present in red grape skins. The stems also contain tannins, but of a harsher kind; most winemakers de-stem most or all of their red grapes before they are crushed.*

For young *white wines and some reds (e.g. simple Beaujolais) that do not gain complexity from ageing, the crushed grape juice may be steeped, or macerated, with the grape skins for a few hours to add aroma and flavor.*

White wine *uses only free-run or lightly pressed juice for the freshest and fruitiest flavors. For red wine, the grapes are pressed thoroughly after fermentation, and this* vin de presse, *rich in tannins and other flavor elements, can be blended back into the wine as needed.*

Fermentation *is a natural process, but can be unpredictable; nowadays, many growers use cultured yeasts and hygienic, temperature-controlled stainless-steel tanks to control fermentation and ensure consistent results.*

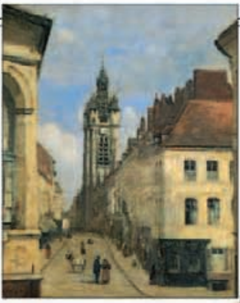
Early drinking wines *may be filtered straight into their bottles, but barrels are used to age many finer wines. The flavors imparted by the oak are an integral part of many wines' identities – for example, the tobaccoey, "wood-shavings" character of red Bordeaux.*

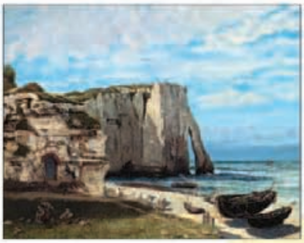
Different shades of glass identify the wine regions

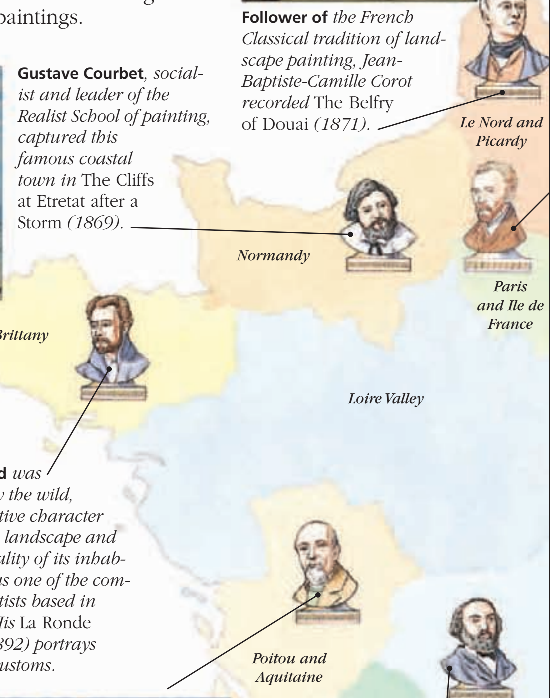
Bottle shapes typical of red Bordeaux (left) and Burgundy

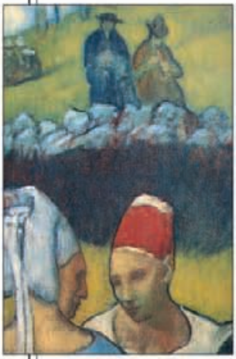
Artists in France

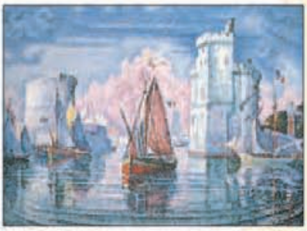
Artists have always been inspired by France, especially since landscape became a legitimate subject for art in the 19th century. Art and tourism have been closely linked for over a century, when the establishment of artists' colonies in the forest of Fontainebleau, Brittany, and the south of France did much to make these areas attractive to visitors. Today, one of the pleasures of touring the countryside is the recognition of landscapes made famous in paintings.

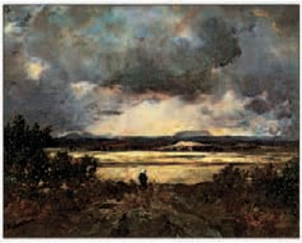

Follower of *the French Classical tradition of landscape painting, Jean-Baptiste-Camille Corot recorded* The Belfry of Douai *(1871).*

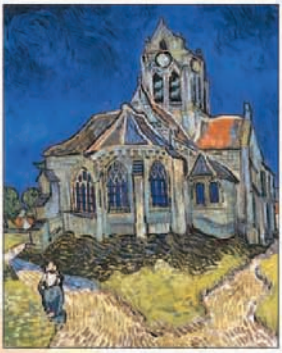

Gustave Courbet, *socialist and leader of the Realist School of painting, captured this famous coastal town in* The Cliffs at Etretat after a Storm *(1869).*



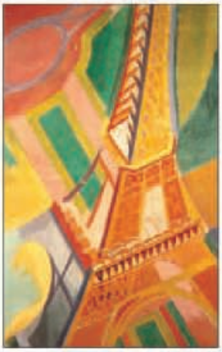

Emile Bernard *was fascinated by the wild, almost primitive character of the Breton landscape and the individuality of its inhabitants. He was one of the community of artists based in Pont Aven. His* La Ronde Bretonne *(1892) portrays local Celtic customs.*


Neo-Impressionist *artist and exponent of Pointillism, Paul Signac indulged his love of maritime subjects on the coasts of France.* Entrance to the Port at La Rochelle *(1921) shows his use of myriad dots of color to represent nature.*

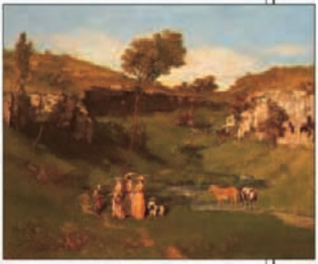

Théodore Rousseau, *the leading light of the Barbizon School* (see p181) *of landscape painters, visited the Auvergne in 1830. It was here that he began to paint* "en plein air" *(in the open air). The results are seen in this sensitively observed scene,* Sunset, Auvergne *(c.1830).*



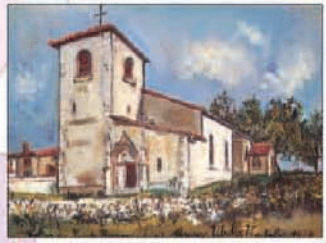
A few months *before his tragic death in July 1890, Vincent Van Gogh painted the* Church at Auvers. *He noted that the building "appears to have a violet-hued blue color; pure cobalt."*



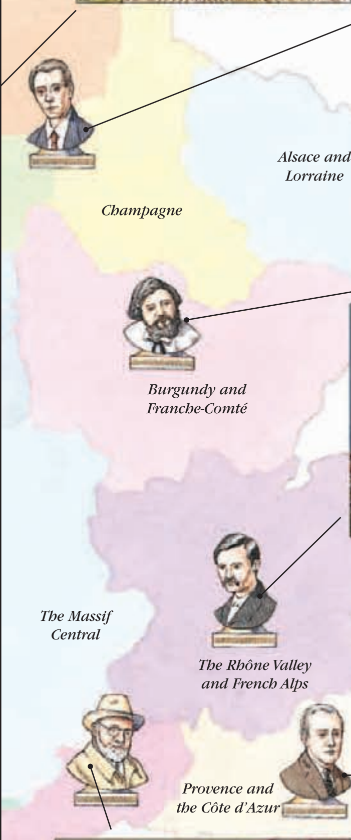
In his Eiffel Tower *(1926) Robert Delaunay investigated the abstract qualities of color. His wife, artist Sonia Delaunay, said, "The Eiffel Tower and the Universe were one and the same to him."*

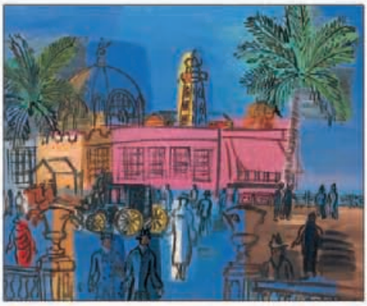


Scenes from *everyday life were realistically rendered by Gustave Courbet, as here in* Young Ladies of the Village Giving Alms to a Cow Girl in a Valley near Ornans *(1851–2).*

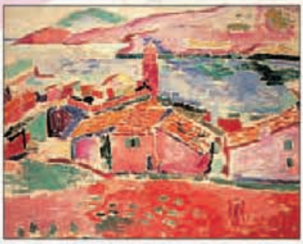


Maurice Utrillo *painted this village scene,* The Church of Saint Bernard in Summer *(1924), while staying at his mother's home. The somber tone and emptiness reflect his unhappy life.*


Alsace and Lorraine
Champagne
Burgundy and Franche-Comté
The Massif Central
The Rhône Valley and French Alps
Provence and the Côte d'Azur



The French Riviera *attracted many artists* (see pp472–3). *Raoul Dufy particularly appreciated its pleasures, seen in this typical scene of blue skies and palm trees,* La Jetée Promenade à Nice *(1928).*



Landscape at Collioure *(1905) depicts the vivid colors of this little Catalan fishing village. It was here that Henri Matisse founded the art movement of the Fauves, or "Wild Beasts," who used exceptionally bright, expressive colors.*

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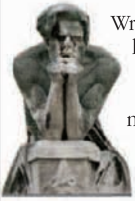
0 miles 100

Writers in France



Monument to Baudelaire

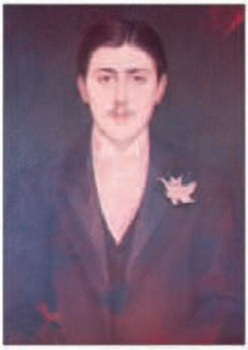
Writers and intellectuals traditionally enjoy high prestige in France. One of the most august of French institutions is the Academie Française, whose 40 members, most of them writers, have pronounced on national events and, on occasion, held public office.

The work of many French novelists is deeply rooted in their native area, ranging from the Normandy of Gustave Flaubert to Jean Giono's Provence. In addition to their literary merit, these novels provide a unique guide to France's regional identities.

THE NOVEL

The farmland of the Beauce, where Zola based his novel, *La Terre*

The first great French writer was Rabelais in the 16th century, a boisterous, life-affirming satirist *(see p295)*. Many writers in the Age of Enlightenment that followed emphasized the tradition of reason, clarity, and objectivity in their work. The 19th century was the golden age of the French humanist novel, producing Balzac, with his vast fresco of contemporary society; Stendhal, a fierce critic of the frailties of ambition in *Scarlet and Black*; and Victor Hugo, known for epics such as *Les Misérables*. George Sand broke ground with her novels such as *The Devil's Pool* which depicted peasant life, albeit in an idealized way. In the same century, Flaubert produced his masterwork *Madame Bovary*, a study of provincialism and misplaced romanticism. In contrast, Zola wrote *Germinal*, *La Terre*, and other studies of lower-class life.



Marcel Proust, author of *Remembrance of Things Past*

Marcel Proust combined a poetic evocation of his boyhood with a portrait of high society in his long novel, *Remembrance of Things Past*.

Colette's house in Burgundy

Others have also written poetically about their childhood, such as Alain-Fournier in *Le Grand Meaulnes* and Colette in *My Mother's House*.

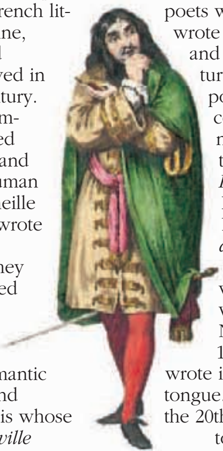
A new kind of novel emerged after World War I. Jean Giono's *Joy of Man's Desiring* and François Mauriac's masterly *Thérèse Desqueyroux* explored the impact of landscape upon human character. Mauriac, and also George Bernanos in his *Diary of a Country Priest*, used lone spiritual struggle as a theme. The free-thinker André Gide was another leading writer of the inter-war years with his *Strait is the Gate* and the autobiographical *If it Die*.

In the 1960s Alain Robbe-Grillet and others experimented with the Nouveau Roman, which subordinated character and plot to detailed physical description. Critics held it in part responsible for the recent decline of the novel. Despite this, the 2008 Nobel Prize for literature was awarded to Franco-Mauritian Jean-Marie Gustave Le Clézio.

Hugo's novel *Les Misérables*, made into a musical in the 1980s

THEATER

The three classic playwrights of French literature, Racine, Molière, and Corneille, lived in the 17th century. Molière's comedies satirized the vanities and foibles of human nature. Corneille and Racine wrote noble verse tragedies. They were followed in the 18th century by Marivaux, writer of romantic comedies, and Beaumarchais whose *Barber of Seville* and *Marriage of Figaro* later became operas. Victor Hugo's dramas were the most vigorous product of the 19th century. The exceptional dramatists of the 20th century range from Jean Anouilh, author of urbane philosophical comedies, to Jean Genet, ex-convict critic of the establishment. In the 1960s, Eugene Ionesco from Romania and Samuel Beckett from Ireland were among the pioneers of a new genre, the "theater of the absurd." Since then, no major playwrights have emerged but experimental work flourishes in state-subsidized theater companies.


Molière, the 17th-century dramatist

POETRY

The greatest of early French poets was Ronsard, who wrote sonnets about nature and love in the 16th century. Lamartine, a major poet of the early 19th century, also took nature as one of his themes (his poem *Le Lac* laments a lost love). Later the same century, Baudelaire *(Les Fleurs du mal)* and Rimbaud *(Le Bateau Ivre)* were judged to be provocative in their day. Nobel prizewinner in 1904, Frédéric Mistral wrote in his native Provençal tongue. The greatest poet of the 20th century is considered to be Paul Valéry, whose work is profoundly philosophical.

PHILOSOPHY

France has produced a large number of leading philosophers in the European humanist tradition. One of the first was Montaigne, in the 16th century, an inspired moralist who established the essay as an art form. Then came Descartes, the master of logic, and the philosopher Pascal. The 18th century produced two great figures – Voltaire, the supreme liberal, and Rousseau, who preached the harmonizing influence of living close to nature.

In the 20th century, Sartre, de Beauvoir, and Camus used the novel as a philosophical vehicle. Sartre led the existentialist movement in Paris in the early 1940s with his novel *Nausea* and his treatise *Being and Nothingness*. Camus' novel, *The Outsider,* was equally influential.

Throughout the '70s and '80s the radical ideas of the structuralists seized Paris (Barthes, Foucault, etc.). Post-structuralism relayed this rationalist approach into the '90s,with Derrida, Kristeva, Deleuze, and Lyotard.

Sartre and de Beauvoir in La Coupole restaurant in Paris, 1969

CARNETS
nrf
LE MALENTENDU
CALIGULA
nrf
Novels by Albert Camus, who won the Nobel Prize in 1957

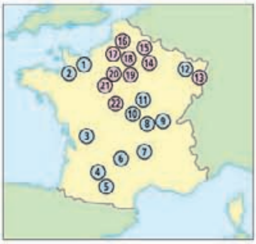
FOREIGN WRITERS

Many foreign writers have visited and been inspired by France, from Petrarch in 14th-century Avignon to Goethe in Alsace in 1770–71. In the 20th century the Riviera attracted novelists Somerset Maugham, Katherine Mansfield, Ernest Hemingway, and Graham Greene. In 1919 the American Sylvia Beach opened the first Shakespeare and Company bookshop in Paris, which became a cultural center for expatriate writers. In 1922 she was the first to publish James Joyce's masterwork, *Ulysses*.

Hemingway with Sylvia Beach and friends, Paris 1923

Romanesque and Gothic Architecture in France

France is rich in medieval architecture, ranging from small Romanesque churches to great Gothic cathedrals. As the country emerged from the Dark Ages in the 11th century, there was a surge in Romanesque building, based on the Roman model of thick walls, round arches, and heavy vaults. French architects improved this basic structure, leading to the flowering of Gothic in the 13th century. Pointed arches and flying buttresses were the key inventions that allowed for much taller buildings with larger windows.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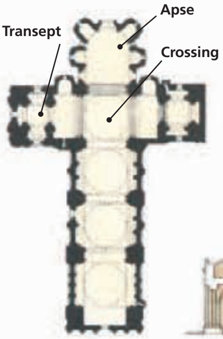
LOCATOR MAP

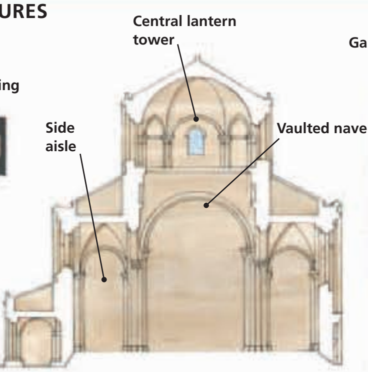
① *Romanesque abbeys & churches*

⑬ *Gothic cathedrals*

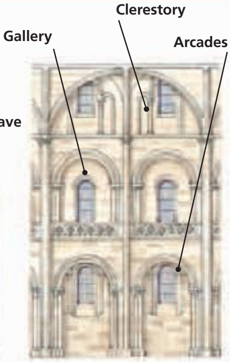
ROMANESQUE FEATURES


Transept
Apse
Crossing

The plan of Angoulême *shows the cross-shape and the rounded eastern apse typical of Romanesque architecture.*

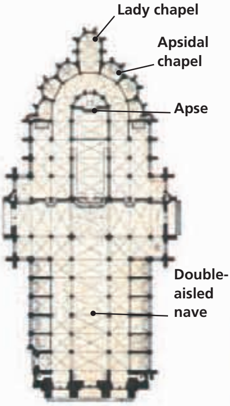

Central lantern tower
Side aisle
Vaulted nave

A section of Le Puy *reveals a high barrel-vaulted nave with round arches and low side aisles. Light could enter through windows in the side aisles and the central lantern tower.*

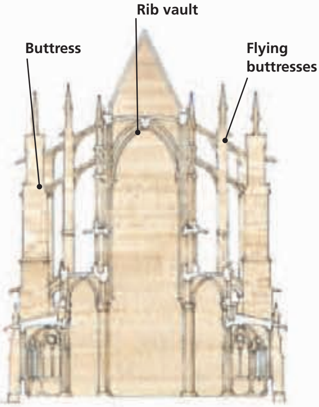

Gallery
Clerestory
Arcades

The massive walls *of the nave bays of St-Etienne support a three-storey structure of arcades, a gallery, and clerestory.*

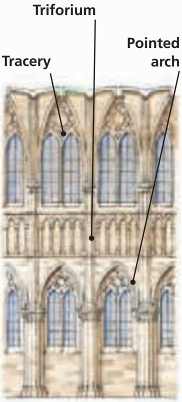
GOTHIC FEATURES


Lady chapel
Apsidal chapel
Apse
Double-aisled nave

The plan of Amiens *shows the nave and apse flanked by a continuous row of chapels.*


Rib vault
Buttress
Flying buttresses

A section of Beauvais *shows how the nave could be raised to staggering heights thanks to exterior support from flying buttresses.*


Triforium
Tracery
Pointed arch

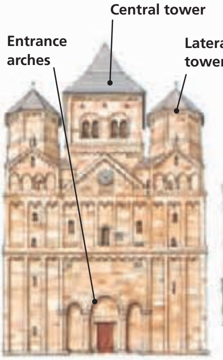
Pointed arches *withstood greater stress, permitting larger windows as in the nave at Reims.*

WHERE TO FIND ROMANESQUE ARCHITECTURE

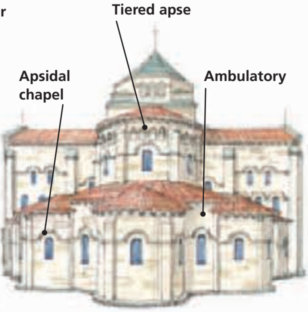
① St-Etienne, Caen *p254*
② Mont-St-Michel, Normandy *p258*
③ St-Pierre, Angoulême *p419*
④ Notre-Dame, Le Puy *p365*
⑤ St-Pierre, Moissac *pp442–3*
⑥ St-Sernin, Toulouse *pp446–7*
⑦ Ste-Foy, Conques *pp358–9*
⑧ Sacré-Coeur, Paray-le-Monial *p345*
⑨ St-Philibert, Tournus *p344*
⑩ St-Etienne, Nevers *p338*
⑪ Ste-Madeleine, Vézelay *pp336–7*
⑫ Marmoutier, Saverne *p233*

WHERE TO FIND GOTHIC ARCHITECTURE

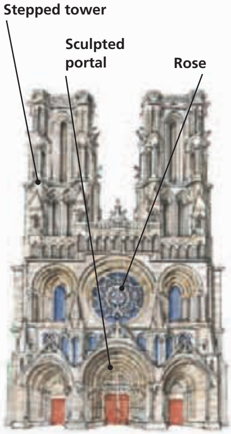
⑬ Notre-Dame, Strasbourg *p231*
⑭ Notre-Dame, Reims *pp212–3*
⑮ Notre-Dame, Laon *p205*
⑯ Notre-Dame, Amiens *pp202–3*
⑰ St-Pierre, Beauvais *p200*
⑱ St-Denis, Ile-de-France *p172*
⑲ Sainte-Chapelle, Paris *pp84–5*
⑳ Notre-Dame, Paris *pp86–7*
㉑ Notre-Dame, Chartres *pp308–11*
㉒ St-Etienne, Bourges *p313*



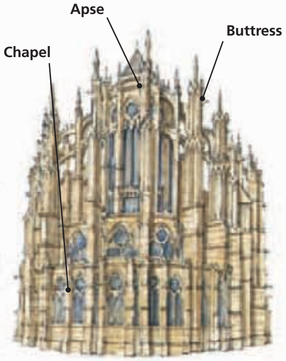
The west façade of Marmoutier Abbey *with its towers, narrow windows, and small portal give it a fortified appearance.*



The east end of Nevers *has a rounded apse surrounded by a semicircular ambulatory and radiating chapels. The chapels were added to provide space for altars.*



The west façade of Laon *has decorative, sculpted portals and a rose window characteristic of Gothic style.*

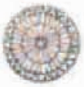


The east end of Beauvais, *with its delicate buttresses topped by pinnacles, is the culmination of High Gothic.*

TERMS USED IN THIS GUIDE

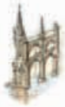
Basilica: Early church with two aisles and nave lit from above by clerestory windows.

Clerestory: A row of windows illuminating the nave from above the aisle roof.



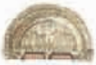
Rose: Circular window, often stained glass.

Buttress: Mass of masonry built to support a wall.



Flying buttress: An arched support transmitting thrust of the weight downward.

Portal: Monumental entrance to a building, often decorated.



Tympanum: Decorated space, often carved, over a door or window lintel.

Vault: Arched stone ceiling.

Transept: Two wings of a cruciform church at right angles to the nave.

Crossing: Center of cruciform where transept crosses nave.

Lantern: Turret with windows to illuminate interior, often with cupola (domed ceiling).

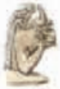
Triforium: Middle story between arcades and clerestory.

Apse: Termination of the church, often rounded.

Ambulatory: Aisle running round east end, passing behind the sanctuary.

Arcade: Set of arches and supporting columns.

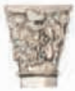
Rib vault: Vault supported by projecting ribs of stone.



Gargoyle: Carved grotesque figure, often a water spout.

Tracery: Ornamental carved stone pattern within Gothic window.

Flamboyant Gothic: Carved stone tracery resembling flames.



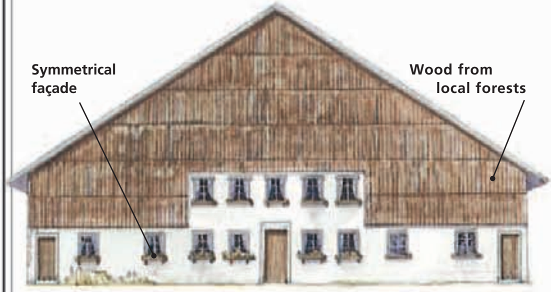
Capital: Top of a column, usually carved.

Rural Architecture

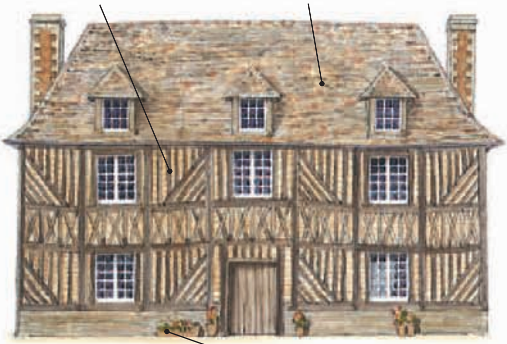
French farmhouses are entirely products of the soil, built of stone, clay, or wood, depending on which materials are found locally. As the topography changes so does the architecture, from the steeply-sloped roofs covered in flat tiles in the north to the broad canal-tiled roofs of the south.

Despite this rich regional diversity, French farmhouses fall into three basic categories: the *maison bloc,* where house and outbuildings share the same roof; the high house, with living quarters upstairs and livestock or wine cellar below; and courtyard farmsteads, their buildings set around a central court.

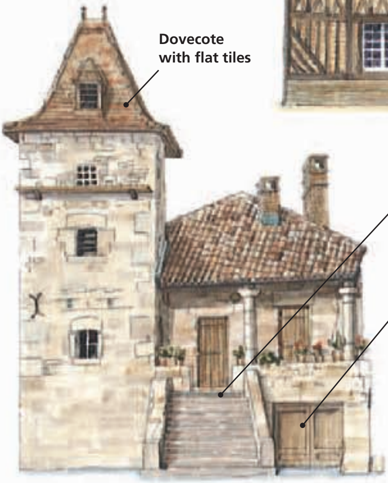
Shuttered window in Alsace


Symmetrical façade
Wood from local forests

The chalet *is typical of the Jura, Alps, and Vosges mountains. The* maison bloc *housed both family and livestock throughout the winter. Gaps between the gable planks allowed air to circulate around crops stored in the loft, and an earth ramp behind gave wagons access. Many lofts also had a threshing floor.*

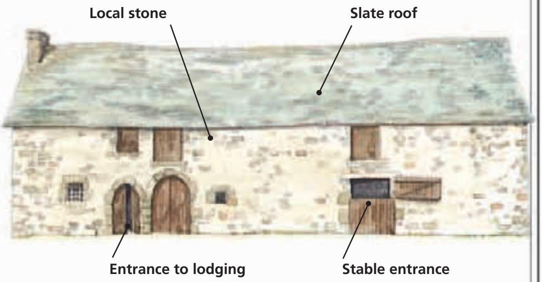

Normandy wood structure
Flat-tiled roof
Raised stone foundations

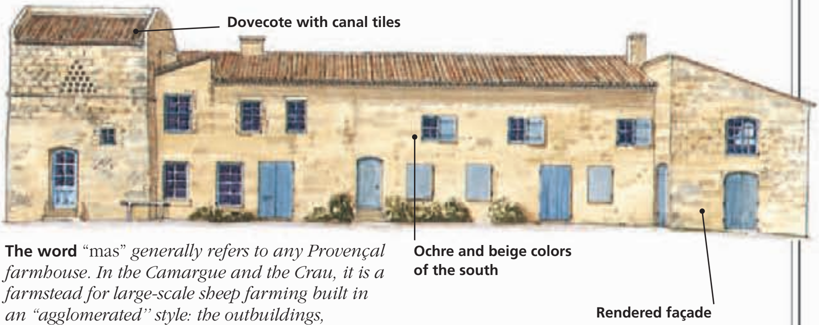
Half-timbered houses *are typical of Normandy, Alsace, Champagne, Picardy, the Landes, and Basque country. The filling between the timbers was wattle and daub or in some cases brick, but it is the arrangement of the smaller posts, different in each region, that best expresses the local style.*


Dovecote with flat tiles
Steps to front door
Animals or wine housed here

The high house *is most prominent in the southeast, and is normally built of stone with an exterior stone staircase and upstairs porch. Wine growers' barrels could be stored on the ground floor without hoisting, or livestock stabled there. High houses in the Lot Valley often feature a dovecote.*

The long house *is the oldest form of* maison bloc*, with family and livestock at opposite ends of the building – originally one room. In this Breton version, separate doorways lead to house and stable. A dividing wall only became common in the 19th century.*




Dovecote with canal tiles
Ochre and beige colors of the south
Rendered façade

The word “mas” *generally refers to any Provençal farmhouse. In the Camargue and the Crau, it is a farmstead for large-scale sheep farming built in an “agglomerated” style: the outbuildings, although attached to one another, are of different heights. Often, a dovecote is included.*

WALLS

Limestone, granite, sandstone and pebbles were all used for building walls. But if no stone was available, clay was dug for infilling half-timbered houses, as wattle and daub. The alternative was to use a cob mixture *(pisé)*, pressed into blocks in a process called *banchange*. Adobe (sun-dried brick) was also used but fired brick was fairly rare as it was expensive to bake. However, brick was sometimes used as trim or combined with chalk or pebbles in a “composite” walling. Walls were generally rendered with mortar.

Pebble and brick wall

Half-timber and brick

Compressed cob: *pisé*

Sun-dried adobe bricks

Pebbles in lime mortar

Brick, flint, and chalk

ROOFING

Two roof styles distinguish the north and south. Northern roofs are steeply pitched, so that any rainwater runs off easily. In the south, roofs are covered with canal clay tiles, and more gently sloped to prevent the tiles sliding off.

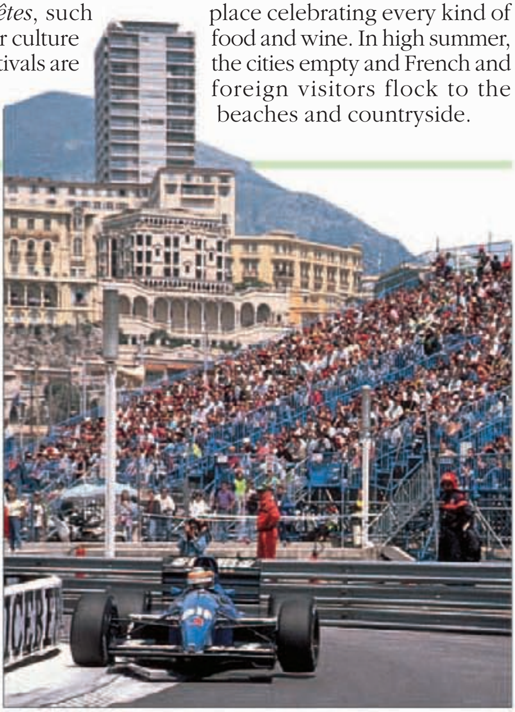
Flat terra cotta tiles in colors of local sand

Pantiles, used in Flanders and Picardy

Canal clay tiles typical of the south

FRANCE THROUGH THE YEAR

The French, with their farming roots, are deeply aware of the changing seasons, and the mild climate means they can celebrate outdoors most of the year. History and tradition are honored with *fêtes*, such as Bastille Day (July 14). For culture lovers, thousands of arts festivals are held throughout France, ranging from the huge Avignon Theater Festival down to small village events. National sports events, such as the Tour de France bicycle race, are a key feature in the calendar. Throughout the year, festivals take place celebrating every kind of food and wine. In high summer, the cities empty and French and foreign visitors flock to the beaches and countryside.



Formula One racing at the Monaco Grand Prix

SPRING

France's outdoor life resumes in spring, terrace-cafés filling up in the sunshine. Easter is a time of Catholic processions and concerts of sacred music. The Cannes Film Festival in May is the best known of the season's many conventions and trade fairs.

MARCH

International Half Marathon beginning and ending at Château de Vincennes.
Tinta' Mars *(two weeks)*, Langres. Cabaret and musical evenings at various venues.
Grenoble Jazz Festival *(two weeks Mar)*. Jazz concerts.
Banlieues Blues Jazz Festival *(Mar)*, Saint-Denis. Jazz music.
Six Nations Rugby Tournament, Stade de France, Paris.

Rugby ball

La Bravade procession honoring Saint Torpes in St-Tropez

Festival d'Amiens (*mid-Mar/early Apr*). Celebrated jazz festival at various venues.

APRIL

Festival de Pâques *(Easter week)*, chamber music festival, Deauville *(see p255)*.
Feria Pascale *(Easter week)*. The whole town parties as the bull-fighting season begins, Arles *(see pp508–9)*.
Lourdes Pilgrimage *(Palm Sun to Oct, see p459)*.
Floréal Musical d'Epinal *(early Apr–mid-May)*. Multi-genre music festival, Epinal.
Bourges Spring Festival *(end Apr/early May, see p313)*, modern music.
Europa Jazz Festival, Le Mans. Jazz musicians from all over the world perform.
Joan of Arc Festival *(end Apr–early May)*, pageant and cathedral service, Orléans *(see p312)*.
Paris International Marathon from Place de la Concorde to Avenue Foch.

Spring asparagus

MAY

Asparagus harvest, notably in the Loire.
International Grand Prix de Monaco *(Ascension weekend, see p530)*.
La Bravade *(May 16–18)*, St-Tropez *(see p516)*.

Cannes Film Festival *(second and third week).*
Gypsy Pilgrimage *(late May)*, Stes-Maries-de-la-Mer *(see p510).*
Fête de la Transhumance *(end May)*. Herds are taken up to summer pastures.
International Garden Festival *(mid-May–mid-Oct)*, Chaumont sur Loire.
Nîmes Feria *(Pentecost)*, bullfights and street music festival *(see p496).*
Grandes Eaux Musicales *(Apr–Oct: Sun; Jul–Sep: Sat–Sun)*, Versailles. Classical music in the grounds of the château.
Puy-du-Fou Pageant *(May–Sep)*. Audio-guides and horse stunts evoke local life through the ages *(see p290).*
Soccer Cup Final *(second week),* Stade de France, Paris.
Le Printemps des Arts *(mid-May–Jun),* Nantes area. Baroque dance and music.

Traditional transhumance of animals to summer pastures

SUMMER

The French vacation season begins in mid-July, with the return to work and school *(la rentrée)* in early September. Beaches, marinas, and camp sites are all full to bursting. Every village has its *fête* and there are festivals, sporting events, and flea markets.

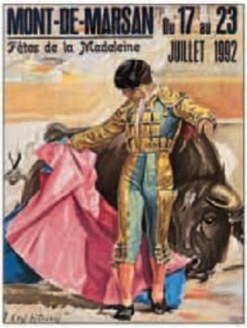
JUNE

French Tennis Open *(last wk May–first wk Jun),* Stade Roland Garros, Paris.
Strasbourg International Music Festival *(Jun–Jul).*
International Sailing Week *(early Jun),* La Rochelle.
Le Mans 24-Hour Automobile Race *(second or third w/e, see p291).*
Fête de la Musique *(Jun 21)*, music events all over France.
Fête de St-Jean *(Jun 24)*, music, bonfires, and fireworks all over France.
Gay Pride March *(Jun 23)*, The march engulfs Paris.
Tarasque Festival *(last weekend)*, Tarascon *(see p507).*

The rose season in full bloom

JULY

Festival d'Art Lyrique *(Jun–Jul)*, Aix-en-Provence *(see p511).*
Avignon Theater Festival *(all month, see p503).*
Paris-Plage *(mid-Jul–mid-Aug)*. Paris and other cities get an annual temporary beach.
Tombées de la Nuit *(first week)*, Rennes. Arts festival.
Troménie *(2nd Sun Jul)*, Locronan. Procession of penitents *(see p273).*
Comminges Music Festival *(Jul–end Aug, see p462).*
Nice Jazz Festival *(late-Jul).*
Mont-de-Marsan Feria *(third w/e)*. Bullfights and music *(see p425).*
International Jazz Festival *(second half)*, Antibes and Juan-les-Pins *(see p521).*
Jazz Vienne *(first two weeks)*, Vienne *(see p382).*
Fête de St-Louis *(around Aug 25)*, Sète *(see p492).*
Tour de France cycle race *(1st three weeks)*. The grand finale takes place on the Champs-Elysées, Paris.
Francofolies *(mid-Jul)*, Music festival at La Rochelle.



Bullfighting in Mont-de-Marsan

Cyclists in the final stage of the Tour de France bicycle race

Vacationers on a crowded beach in Cannes on the Côte d'Azur

AUGUST

Pablo Casals Festival *(end Jul–mid-Aug)*, Prades *(see p480)*.
Les Rendezvous de l'Erdre *(last w/e)*, Nantes. Jazz and riverboats *(see p290)*.
Mimos *(1st week)*, Périgueux. World famous international mime festival.

Avignon Theater Festival performer

Fête du Jasmin *(first w/e)*, Grasse *(see p517)*. Floats, music, dancing in town.
Foire aux Sorciers *(first Sun)*, Bué (nr Bourges). Costumed witch and wizard festival and folk groups.
Parade of Lavender Floats *(first or second weekends)*, Digne *(see p517)*.
Fête de la Véraison *(first or second w/e)*, medieval celebration of thanksgiving for the bounty of the fruit harvest, Châteauneuf-du-Pape *(see p502)*.
Interceltic Festival *(second week)*, Celtic arts and music, Lorient.
Feria – Bullfight *(mid-Aug)*, Dax *(see p425)*.
St-Jean-Pied-de-Port-Basque Fête *(mid-Aug, see p454)*.

AUTUMN

In wine regions, the grape harvest is the occasion for much gregarious jollity, and every wine village has its wine festival. When the new wine is ready in November there are more festivities. The hunting season begins – everywhere there is game shooting. In the southwest, migrating birds are trapped.

SEPTEMBER

Deauville American film Festival *(first two weeks)*.
Picardy Cathedral Festival *(mid-Sep)*, classical concerts in the region's cathedrals.
"Musicades" *(first fortnight)*, Lyon. Classical concerts.
Le Puy "Roi de l'Oiseau," *(second week)*, Renaissance-style festival *(see p365)*.
Grape harvest, wine regions throughout France.
Journées du Patrimoine, *(3rd w/e)*. Over 14,000 historical buildings can be visited, many not normally open.

Ceremony for the Induction of new Chevaliers at the Hospice de Beaune

OCTOBER

Dinard British film Festival *(first week, see p281)*.
Nuit Blanche *(first Sat)*, Paris. Museums stay open all night.
Prix de l'Arc de Triomphe *(first Sun)*, Horse racing at Longchamp, Paris.
Espelette Red Pepper Festival *(last w/e, see p453)*, Basque region.
Abbey de Fontevraud Music *(to spring, p294)*.

Classical cello

NOVEMBER

Dijon International Food and Wine Festival *(first two weeks)*. Traditional gastronomic fair.
Apple Festival *(mid-Nov)*, Le Havre.
Wine Auctions and Les Trois Glorieuses *(third weekend)*, Beaune *(see p346)*.
Truffle season *(until Mar)*, Périgord, Quercy and Provence.

WINTER

Christmas wreath

At Christmas, traditional nativity plays are held in churches and there are fairs and markets throughout France. In the Alps and the Pyrenees, and even the Vosges and Massif Central, the ski slopes are crowded. In Flanders and Nice, carnivals take place before Lent.

DECEMBER

Critérium International de la Première Neige *(early Dec)*, Val d'Isère. First competition of the season.

JANUARY

Monte-Carlo Rally *(usually mid-Jan, see p530)*.
Limoux Carnival *(until Mar)*. Street festival held since the Middle Ages.
Fashion shows. Summer collections, Paris.
Festival du Cirque *(end)*, Monaco. International event.
Festival de la Bande Dessinée *(last w/e)*. International strip cartoon festival, Angoulême.

Downhill skier on the slopes in the French Alps

FEBRUARY

Lemon Festival *(mid-Feb–Mar)*, Menton *(see p529)*.
Nice Carnival and the Battle of Flowers *(late Feb–early Mar, see p526)*.
Paris Carnaval, *(date varies, check)*, Quartier St-Fargeau.
Fête de Mimosa, *(3rd Sun)*, Bormes-les-Mimosas.

The Taj Mahal re-created at the Lemon Festival in Menton

Celebrating the Nice Carnival and the Battle of Flowers

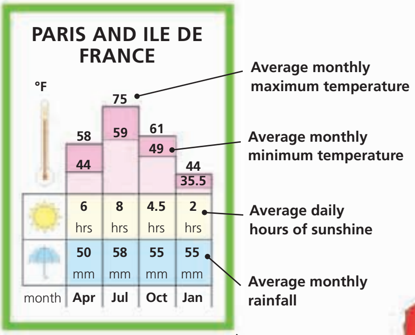
Bastille Day parade past the Arc de Triomphe

PUBLIC HOLIDAYS

New Year's Day (Jan 1)
Easter Sunday and Monday
Ascension Day (sixth Thursday after Easter)
Whit Monday (second Monday after Ascension)
Labor Day (May 1)
VE Day (May 8)
Bastille Day (Jul 14)
Assumption Day (Aug 15)
All Saints' Day (Nov 1)
Remembrance Day (Nov 11)
Christmas Day (Dec 25)

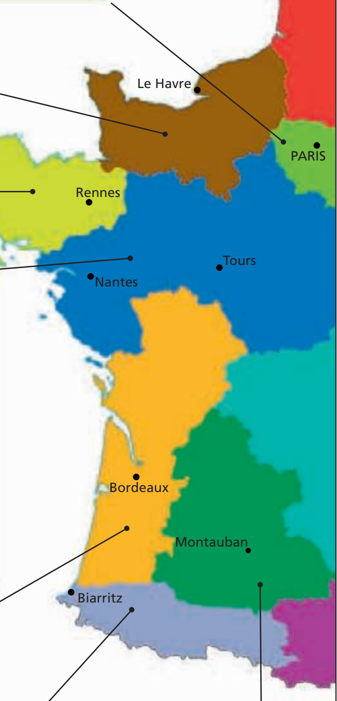
The Climate of France

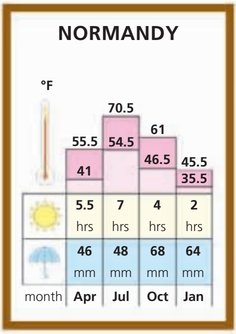
Set on Europe's western edge, France has a varied, temperate climate. An Atlantic influence prevails in the northwest, with westerly sea winds bringing humidity and warm winters. The east experiences Continental temperature extremes with frosty, clear winters and often stormy summers. The south enjoys a Mediterranean climate with hot, dry summers and mild winters, punctuated by violent winds.



PARIS AND ILE DE FRANCE

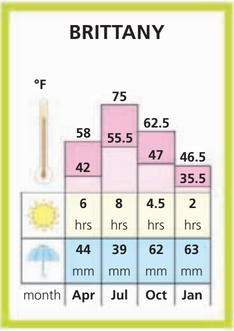
month	Apr	Jul	Oct	Jan
°F	58	75	61	44
°F	44	59	49	35.5
☀	6 hrs	8 hrs	4.5 hrs	2 hrs
☂	50 mm	58 mm	55 mm	55 mm





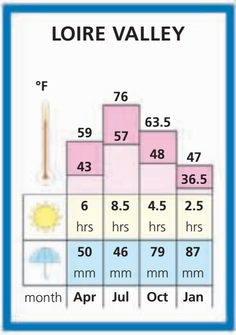
NORMANDY

month	Apr	Jul	Oct	Jan
°F	55.5	70.5	61	45.5
°F	41	54.5	46.5	35.5
☀	5.5 hrs	7 hrs	4 hrs	2 hrs
☂	46 mm	48 mm	68 mm	64 mm



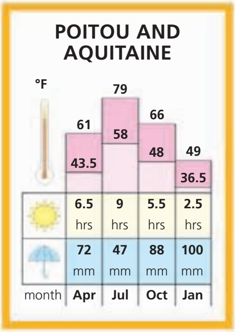
BRITTANY

month	Apr	Jul	Oct	Jan
°F	58	75	62.5	46.5
°F	42	55.5	47	35.5
☀	6 hrs	8 hrs	4.5 hrs	2 hrs
☂	44 mm	39 mm	62 mm	63 mm



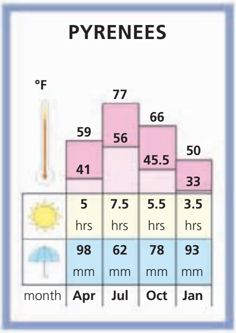
LOIRE VALLEY

month	Apr	Jul	Oct	Jan
°F	59	76	63.5	47
°F	43	57	48	36.5
☀	6 hrs	8.5 hrs	4.5 hrs	2.5 hrs
☂	50 mm	46 mm	79 mm	87 mm



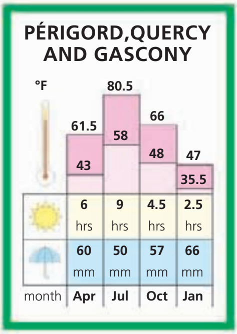
POITOU AND AQUITAINE

month	Apr	Jul	Oct	Jan
°F	61	79	66	49
°F	43.5	58	48	36.5
☀	6.5 hrs	9 hrs	5.5 hrs	2.5 hrs
☂	72 mm	47 mm	88 mm	100 mm



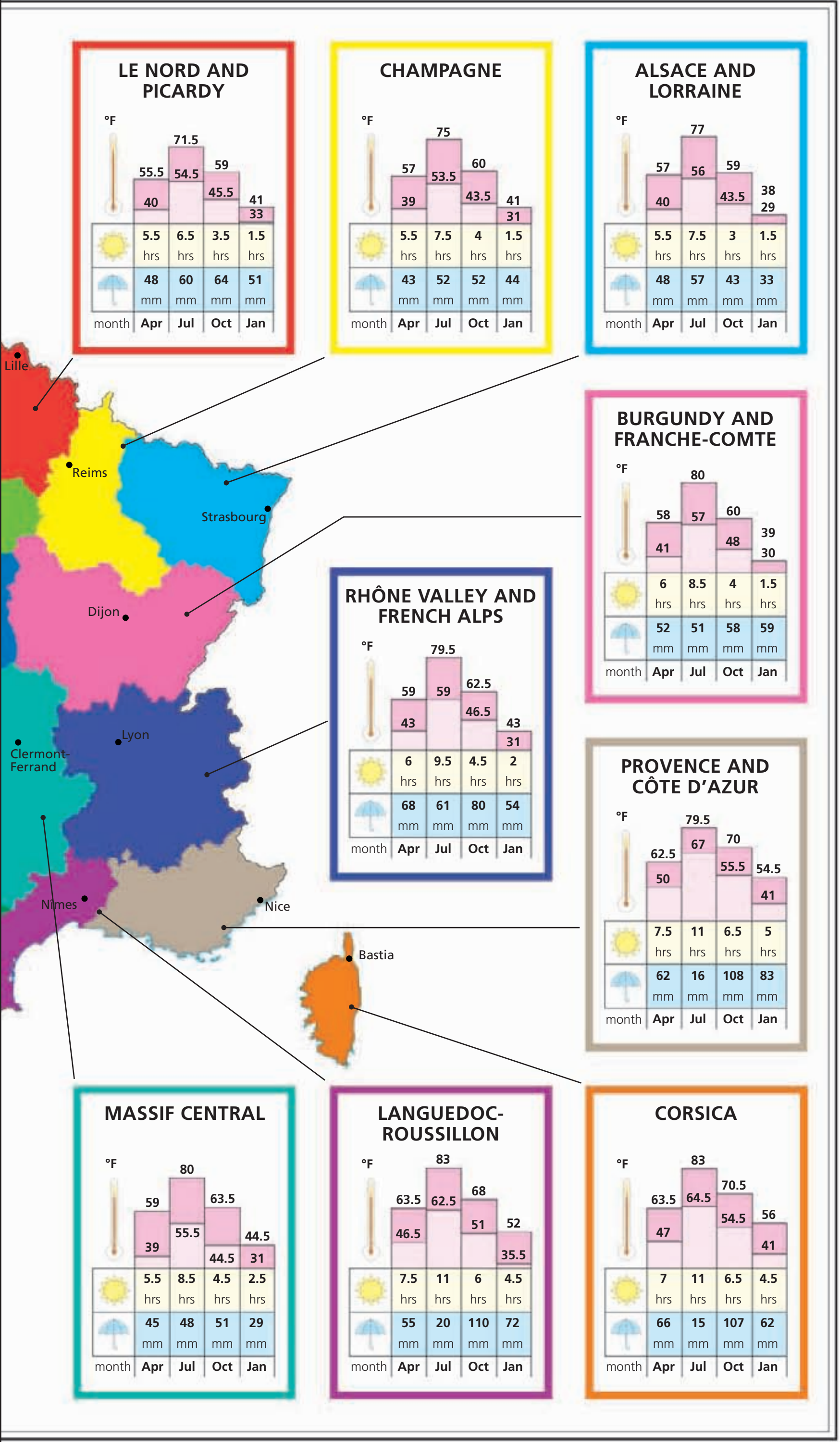
PYRENEES

month	Apr	Jul	Oct	Jan
°F	59	77	66	50
°F	41	56	45.5	33
☀	5 hrs	7.5 hrs	5.5 hrs	3.5 hrs
☂	98 mm	62 mm	78 mm	93 mm



PÉRIGORD,QUERCY AND GASCONY

month	Apr	Jul	Oct	Jan
°F	61.5	80.5	66	47
°F	43	58	48	35.5
☀	6 hrs	9 hrs	4.5 hrs	2.5 hrs
☂	60 mm	50 mm	57 mm	66 mm


LE NORD AND PICARDY
°F
55.5
40
71.5
54.5
59
45.5
41
33
5.5 hrs
6.5 hrs
3.5 hrs
1.5 hrs
48 mm
60 mm
64 mm
51 mm
month
Apr
Jul
Oct
Jan
CHAMPAGNE
°F
57
39
75
53.5
60
43.5
41
31
5.5 hrs
7.5 hrs
4 hrs
1.5 hrs
43 mm
52 mm
52 mm
44 mm
month
Apr
Jul
Oct
Jan
ALSACE AND LORRAINE
°F
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40
77
56
59
43.5
38
29
5.5 hrs
7.5 hrs
3 hrs
1.5 hrs
48 mm
57 mm
43 mm
33 mm
month
Apr
Jul
Oct
Jan
Lille
Reims
Strasbourg
Dijon
Lyon
Clermont-Ferrand
Nîmes
Nice
Bastia
BURGUNDY AND FRANCHE-COMTE
°F
58
41
80
57
60
48
39
30
6 hrs
8.5 hrs
4 hrs
1.5 hrs
52 mm
51 mm
58 mm
59 mm
month
Apr
Jul
Oct
Jan
RHÔNE VALLEY AND FRENCH ALPS
°F
59
43
79.5
59
62.5
46.5
43
31
6 hrs
9.5 hrs
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2 hrs
68 mm
61 mm
80 mm
54 mm
month
Apr
Jul
Oct
Jan
PROVENCE AND CÔTE D'AZUR
°F
62.5
50
79.5
67
70
55.5
54.5
41
7.5 hrs
11 hrs
6.5 hrs
5 hrs
62 mm
16 mm
108 mm
83 mm
month
Apr
Jul
Oct
Jan
MASSIF CENTRAL
°F
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39
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55.5
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31
5.5 hrs
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45 mm
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51 mm
29 mm
month
Apr
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LANGUEDOC-ROUSSILLON
°F
63.5
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72 mm
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CORSICA
°F
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107 mm
62 mm
month
Apr
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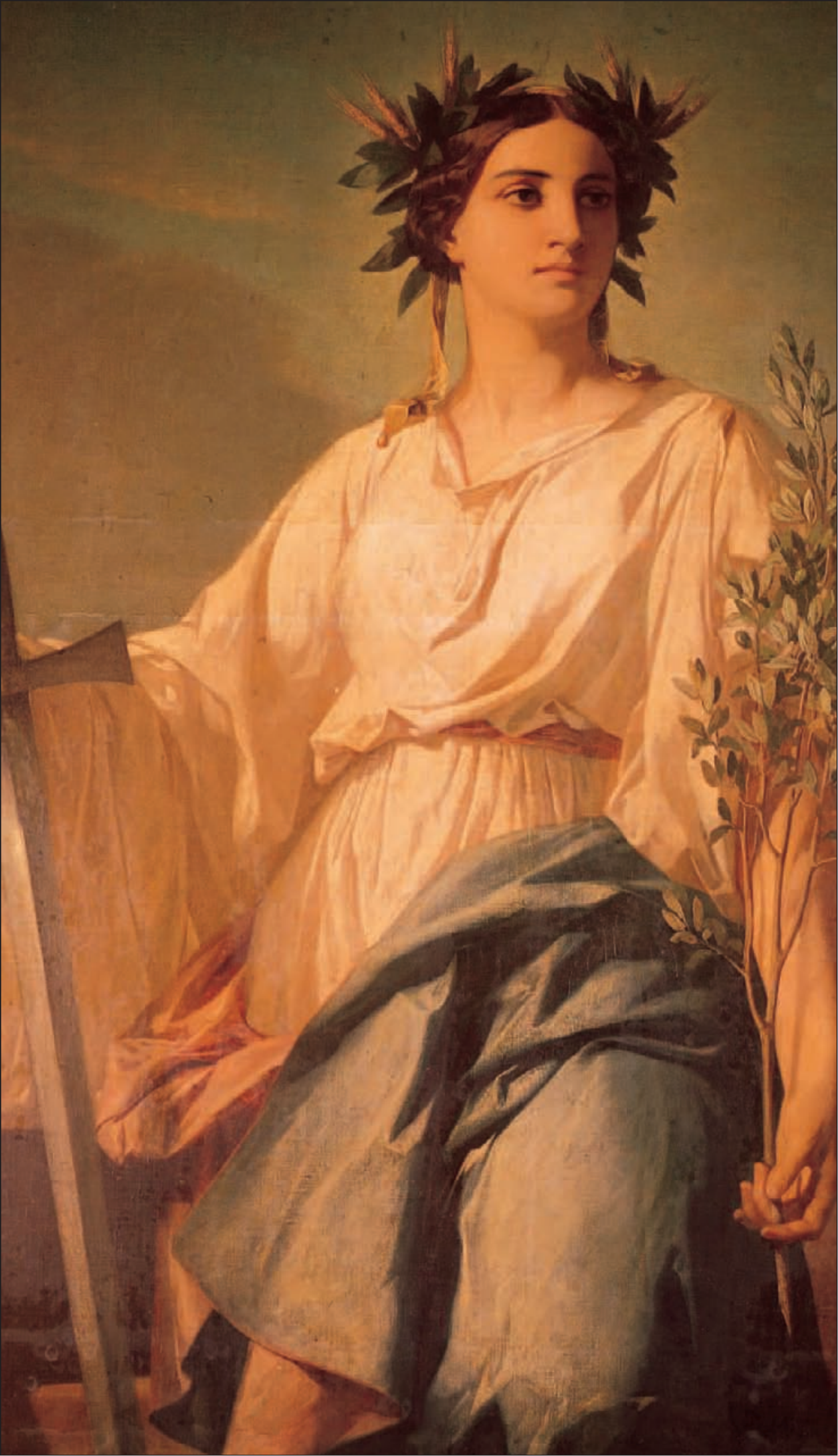
Oct
Jan



THE HISTORY OF FRANCE

The only European country facing both the North Sea and the Mediterranean, France has been subject to a particularly rich variety of cultural influences. Though famous for the rootedness of its peasant population, it has also been a European melting pot, even before the arrival of the Celtic Gauls in the centuries before Christ, through to the Mediterranean immigrations of the 20th century.

Fleur-de-lys, the royal emblem

Roman conquest by Julius Caesar had an enduring impact, but from the 4th and 5th centuries AD, waves of Barbarian invaders destroyed much of the Roman legacy. The Germanic Franks provided political leadership in the following centuries, but when their line died out in the late 10th century, France was socially and politically fragmented.

THE FORMATION OF FRANCE

The Capetian dynasty gradually pieced France together over the Middle Ages, a period of great economic prosperity and cultural vitality. The Black Death and the Hundred Years' War brought setbacks, and the dynasty's power was seriously threatened by the rival Burgundian dukes. France recovered and, despite the wars of religion, flourished during the Renaissance, followed by the grandeur of Louis XIV's reign. During the Enlightenment, in the 18th century, French culture was the envy of Europe.

The Revolution of 1789 ended the absolute monarchy and introduced major social and institutional reforms, many of which were endorsed and consolidated by Napoleon. Yet the Revolution also inaugurated the instability that remained a hallmark of French politics until de Gaulle and the 5th Republic: since 1789, France has known five republics, two empires and three brands of royal power, plus the Vichy government in World War II.

Modernization in the 19th and 20th centuries proved a slow process. Railroads, the military service, and radical educational reforms were crucial in forming a sense of French identity among the citizens.

Rivalry with Germany dominated French politics for most of the late 19th and early 20th century. The population losses in World War I were traumatic for France, while during 1940–44 the country was occupied by Germany. Yet since 1945, the two countries have proved the backbone of the developing European Union.

CARTE DE LA FRANCE
1684
AV ROY
HÆ TIBI ERVNT ARTES
MER DE
GASCOGNE
MER MEDITERRANEE

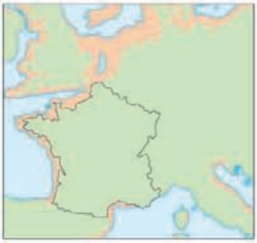
Inlaid marble tabletop showing the map of France in 1684

◁ *La République*, painted by Charles Landelle in 1848

Prehistoric France

Bronze Age vase, Brittany

The earliest traces of human life in France date back to around 2 million BC. From around 40,000 BC, *Homo sapiens* lived an itinerant existence as hunters and gatherers. Around 6000 BC, following the end of the Ice Age, a major shift in lifestyle occurred, as people settled down to herd animals and cultivate crops. The advent of metal-working allowed more effective tools and weapons to be developed. The Iron Age is associated particularly with the Celts, who arrived from the east during the first millennium BC. A more complex social hierarchy developed, consisting of warriors, farmers, artisans, and druids (Celtic priests).



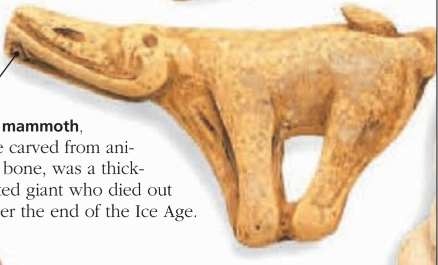
FRANCE IN 8000 BC

🟧 *Former coastline*

🟩 *Present-day land mass*

Carnac Stone Alignments *(4500–4000 BC)* *The purpose of the extensive networks of megaliths around Carnac* (see p278) *remains obscure. They possibly served in pagan rituals or as an astronomical calendar.*

These carvings of horses' heads were found in the Pyrenees and date from around 9000 BC.



The mammoth, here carved from animal bone, was a thick-coated giant who died out after the end of the Ice Age.

Cro-Magnon Man *This skull, dating to c.25,000 BC, was discovered at Cro-Magnon in the Dordogne in 1868. In comparison with most of his predecessors, Cro-Magnon Man was tall, robust, and had a large head. He differed only marginally from us.*

PREHISTORIC ART

The rich deposits of cave art in France have only been recognized as authentic for just over a century. They include wall paintings and daubings but also various engraved objects. Venus figurines, carved with flint tools, probably had ritual and religious rather than erotic purposes.

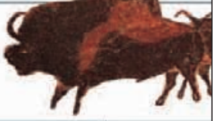
TIMELINE

2,000,000 BC Early hominid societies

400,000 Discovery of fire by *Homo erectus*

30,000 Cro-Magnon Man

28,000 The first Venus sculptures, possibly representing fertility goddesses



Painting of bulls in Lascaux

2,000,000 BC | **30,000** | **25,000** | **20,000**

Primitive stone tool

Doorway, Roquepertuse
Religion was an important part of Celtic life. The Celts made a cult of severed heads – presumably of their enemies – as seen in this sanctuary doorway dating from the 3rd century BC.

The prehistoric hunter's quarry is here represented by a flock of chamois carved on a piece of bone.

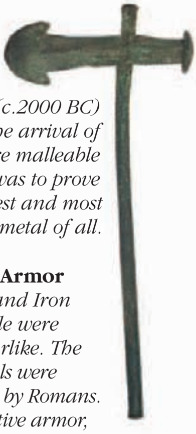
This carved bone, found in Laugerie Basse in the Dordogne, shows a bison chased by a man with a spear.

This highly stylized female figure, a Venus figurine found in southwest France, was carved from mammoth tusk in around 20,000 BC.

WHERE TO SEE PREHISTORIC FRANCE

The Lascaux cave paintings in Périgord *(see p434)* are among the best in the world. Further cave decoration is found around Les Eyzies *(pp434–5)*, at the Vallée des Merveilles near Tendes in the Alpes-Maritimes *(p529)* and in the Grotte du Pech Merle in the Lot Valley *(p438)*. The intriguing menhirs at Filitosa in Corsica *(pp542–3)* are about 4,000 years old.

The Lascaux *cave paintings, dating from 16,000–14,000 BC, include images of bulls and mammoths.*



Copper Axe *(c.2000 BC)*
Copper tools preceded the arrival of the stronger and more malleable bronze alloy. Iron was to prove the toughest and most useful metal of all.

Bronze Armor
Bronze and Iron Age people were highly warlike. The Celtic Gauls were feared even by Romans. Their protective armor, such as this breastplate dating from 750–475 BC, was light but reasonably effective.

15,000 Hunters live on wandering herds of mammoth, rhinoceros, and reindeer. Art includes the Lascaux caves and Val Camonica/Mont Bego engravings

7000–4500 Neolithic revolution: farming, megaliths, and menhir stone sculptures

600 Greek colony at Marseille. Mediterranean luxury goods exchanged for tin, copper, iron, and slaves. Early urban development

15,000 | 10,000 | 5,000

10,000 End of Ice Age. More regions become inhabitable

10,000–6000 Mammoth herds disappear and hunters must rely on animals of the forest, including wild boar and aurochs

1200–700 Arrival of the Celts during the Bronze and Iron Ages

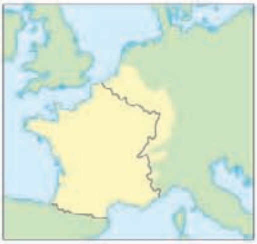
500 Celtic nobles bury their dead with riches such as the Vix treasure *(see p334)*

Celtic helmet

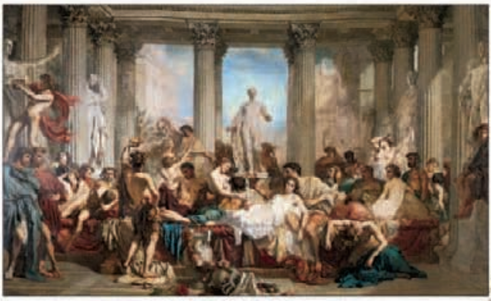
Roman Gaul

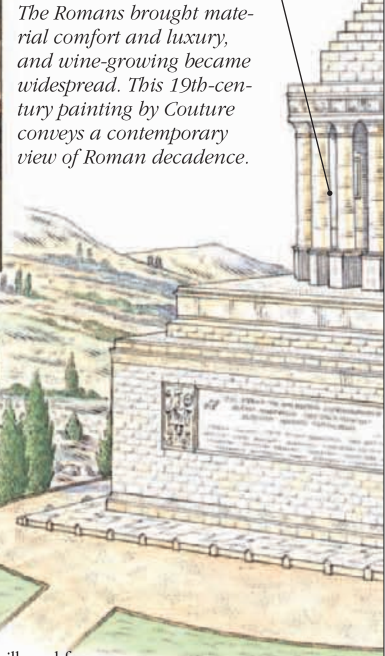
Roman mosaic from Vienne

The Romans had annexed the southern fringe of France by 125–121 BC. Julius Caesar brought the rest of Gaul under Roman control in the Gallic Wars (58–51 BC). The province of Gaul prospered: it developed good communications, a network of cities crammed with public buildings and leisure facilities such as baths and amphitheaters, while in the countryside large villas were established. By the 3rd century AD, however, barbarian raids from Germany were causing increasing havoc. From the 5th century barbarians began to settle throughout Gaul.


FRANCE IN 58 BC

🟨 *Roman Gaul*


Roman Dolce Vita
The Romans brought material comfort and luxury, and wine-growing became widespread. This 19th-century painting by Couture conveys a contemporary view of Roman decadence.


Emperor Augustus, who was considered a living God, was worshipped at this altar.

Vercingetorix
The Celtic chieftain Vercingetorix was Julius Caesar's greatest military opponent. This bronze statue is at Alise-Sainte-Reine (see p334),*the Gauls' final stand in 51 BC.*

LA TURBIE

This impressive monument near Monaco was erected in 6 BC by the Roman Senate. It celebrates Augustus's victory over the Alpine tribes in 14–13 BC. Badly pillaged for its stone, restoration only began in the 1920's.

TIMELINE

200 BC

125–121 BC Roman colonization of Southern Gaul

Julius Caesar

58–51 BC Julius Caesar's Gallic Wars result in establishment of Roman Gaul

100

52–51 BC Vercingetorix revolt

31 BC Frontiers of the Three Gauls *(Gallia Celtica, Gallia Aquitania* and *Gallia Belgica)* established by Augustus

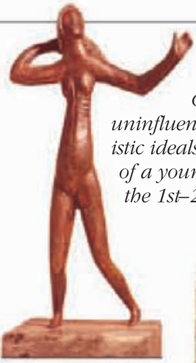
16 BC Maison Carrée built in Nîmes *(see pp496–7)*

0

Augustus

AD 43 Lugdunum (Lyon) established as capital of the Three Gauls

AD 100



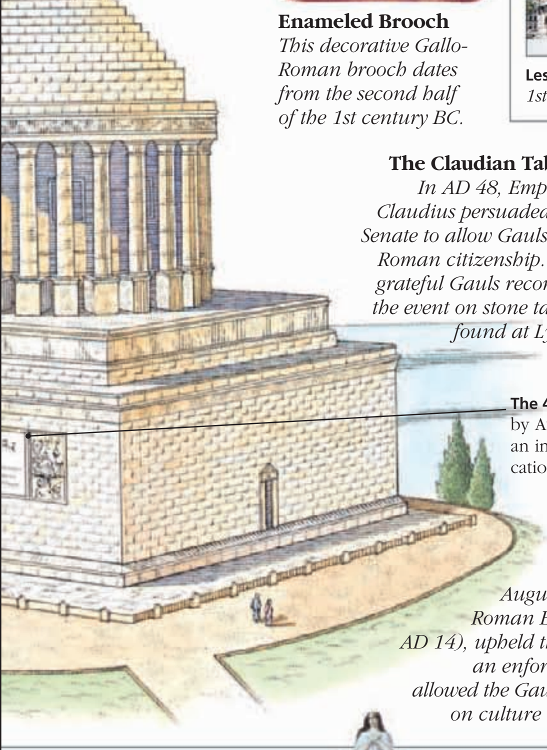
Dancing Girl
Celtic art continued uninfluenced by Roman naturalistic ideals. This bronze statuette of a young woman dates from the 1st–2nd century AD.

WHERE TO SEE GALLO-ROMAN FRANCE

Gallo-Roman remains are to be found all over France, many of them in Provence. In addition to La Turbie *(see p529)* there is the Roman amphitheater in Arles *(p485)* and the theater and triumphal arch in Orange *(p502)*. Elsewhere, there are ruins at Autun in Burgundy *(p339)*, the Temple d'Auguste et Livie in Vienne *(p382)*, Les Arènes at Nîmes *(pp496–7)*, and fragments of Vesunna in Périgueux *(p434)*.

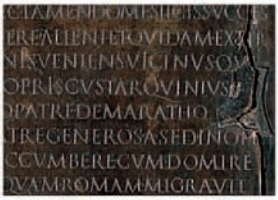
Les Arènes in Nîmes, *built at the end of the 1st century AD, is still in use today.*

Enameled Brooch
This decorative Gallo-Roman brooch dates from the second half of the 1st century BC.



A statue of Augustus was placed at the top of the original monument.

The 44 tribes subjugated by Augustus are listed on an inscription, with a dedication to the emperor.



The Claudian Tables
In AD 48, Emperor Claudius persuaded the Senate to allow Gauls full Roman citizenship. The grateful Gauls recorded the event on stone tables found at Lyon.

Emperor Augustus
Augustus, the first Roman Emperor (27 BC–AD 14), upheld the Pax Romana, an enforced peace which allowed the Gauls to concentrate on culture rather than war.

AD 177 First execution of Christian martyrs, Lyon. Sainte Blandine is thrown to the lions, who refuse to harm her

Sainte Blandine

360 Julian, prefect of Gaul, proclaimed Roman Emperor. Lutetia changes name to Paris

200 **300** **400**

275 First Barbarian raids

313 Christianity officially recognized as religion under the rule of Constantine, the first Christian emperor

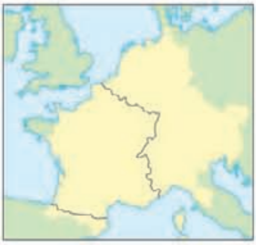
406 Barbarian invasion from the east. Settlement of the Franks and Germanic tribes

476 Overthrow of the last Roman emperor leads to end of the western Roman Empire

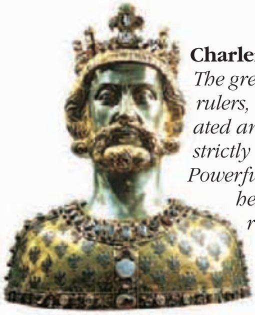
The Monastic Realm

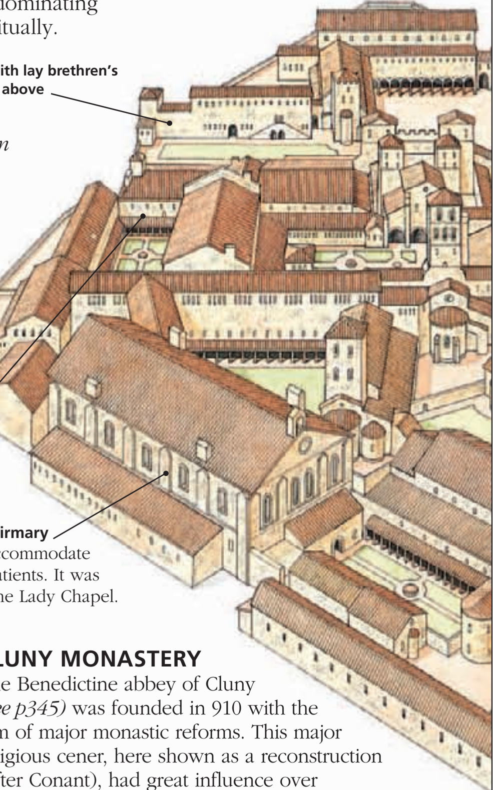
9th-century gold chalice

The collapse of the Roman Empire led to a period of instability and invasions. Both the Frankish Merovingian dynasty (486–751) and the Carolingians (751–987) were unable to bring more than spasmodic periods of political calm. Throughout this turbulent period, the Church provided an element of continuity. As centers for Christian scholars and artists, the monasteries helped to restore the values of the ancient world. They also developed farming and viticulture and some became extremely powerful, dominating the country economically as well as spiritually.


FRANCE IN 751

🟨 *Carolingian Empire*


Charlemagne *(742–814)*
The greatest of Carolingian rulers, Charlemagne created an empire based on strictly autocratic rule. Powerful and charismatic, he could neither read nor write.


Stable with lay brethren's quarters above

Bakery

The great infirmary hall could accommodate about 100 patients. It was flanked by the Lady Chapel.

CLUNY MONASTERY

The Benedictine abbey of Cluny *(see p345)* was founded in 910 with the aim of major monastic reforms. This major religious cener, here shown as a reconstruction (after Conant), had great influence over hundreds of monasteries throughout Europe.

Saint Benedict
Saint Benedict established the Benedictine rule: monks were to divide their time between work and prayer.

TIMELINE

481 Clovis the Frank becomes first Merovingian king

496 Conversion of Clovis, king of the Franks, to Christianity

500

508 Paris made capital of the Frankish kingdom

c.590 Saint Colombanus introduces Irish monasticism to France

600

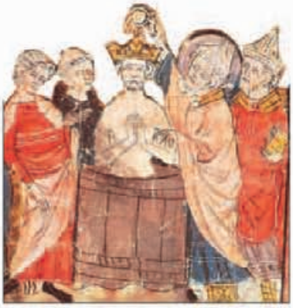
629–37 Dagobert I, the last effective ruler of the Merovingian dynasty, brings temporary unity to the Frankish kingdom

Dagobert I

700

732 Battle of Poitiers: Charles Martel repulses Arab invasion

751 Pepin becomes first king of the Carolingian dynasty

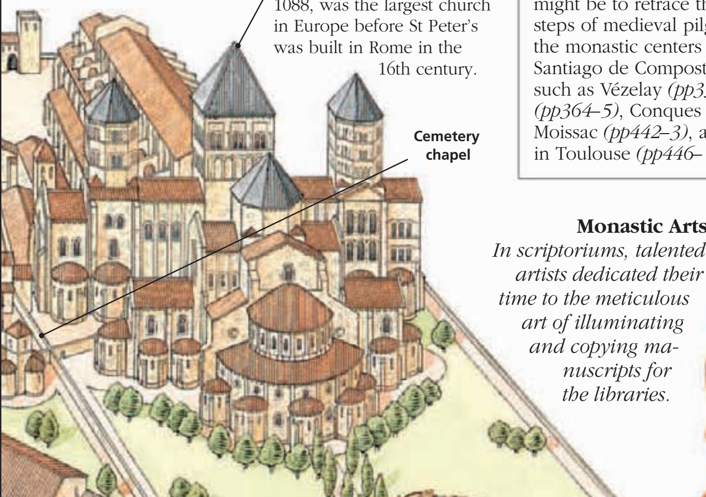


Baptism of Clovis
The Frankish chieftain Clovis was the first barbarian ruler to convert to Christianity. He was baptized in Reims in 496.

WHERE TO SEE MONASTIC FRANCE

Cluny capitals

The monastic realm has survived in austere Cistercian abbeys in Burgundy, such as Fontenay *(see pp332–3)*. Little remains of Cluny, but some of the superb capitals can still be admired *(p345)*. The best way to experience monastic France might be to retrace the steps of medieval pilgrims and visit the monastic centers on the route to Santiago de Compostela *(pp400–01)*, such as Vézelay *(pp336–7)*, Le Puy *(pp364–5)*, Conques *(pp368–9)*, Moissac *(pp442–3)*, and St-Sernin in Toulouse *(pp446–7)*.



The abbey church, begun in 1088, was the largest church in Europe before St Peter's was built in Rome in the 16th century.

Cemetery chapel

Monastic Arts
In scriptoriums, talented artists dedicated their time to the meticulous art of illuminating and copying manuscripts for the libraries.

Monastic Labour
Monks of the Cistercian rule were renowned for their commitment to manual labor such as cultivating the land and producing wine and liqueurs.

Carolingian soldiers

987 Hugh Capet, first Capetian ruler

1066 Conquest of England by the Normans

1096 First Crusade

800

900

1000

800 Coronation of Charlemagne as Holy Roman Emperor

843 Treaty of Verdun: division of the Carolingian Empire into three parts including West Francia

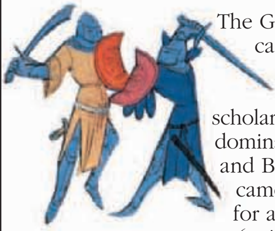
910 Foundation of the Benedictine monastery of Cluny

1077 Bayeux tapestry

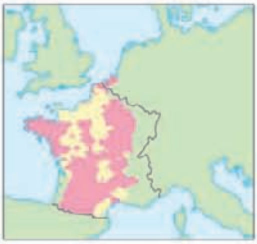
William the Conqueror s teering his ship on the Bayeux tapestry

Gothic France

The Gothic style, epitomized by soaring cathedrals *(see pp32–3)*, emerged in the 12th century at a time of growing prosperity and scholarship, crusades, and an increasingly dominant monarchy. The rival French and Burgundian courts *(see p343)* became models of fashion and etiquette for all of Europe. *Chansons de gestes* (epic poems) performed by troubadours celebrated the code of chivalry.



Medieval knights in combat



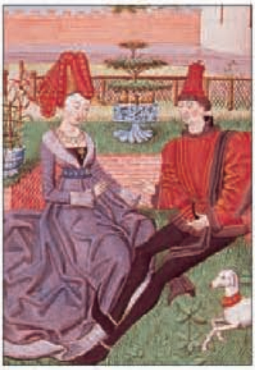
FRANCE IN 1270

🟨 *Royal territory*

🟥 *Other fiefs*

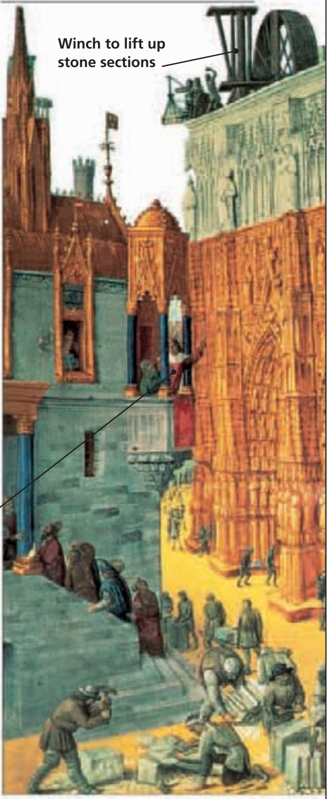
Ciborium of Alpais

Alpais, a renowned 12th-century goldsmith in Limoges, made this superb ciborium used to hold wafers for the Holy Communion.



Courtly Love

According to the code of chivalry, knights dedicated their service to an ideal but unapproachable lady. Courtesy and romance were introduced in art and music.

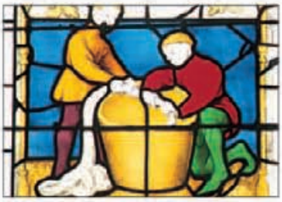


Winch to lift up stone sections

The king supervised the building of the cathedral, accompanied by the architect.

Draper's Window

The textile trade benefited from the era of urban prosperity. This stained-glass window in a church in Semur-en-Auxois (see p335) *shows wool washers at work.*



TIMELINE

c.1100 First edition of the epic poem *Chanson de Roland*

1115 Saint Bernard founds the Cistercian abbey at Clairvaux

1117 Secret marriage of the scholar Abelard and his student Héloïse. Her uncle, canon Filibert, does not approve and forces him to become a monk while she retires as a nun

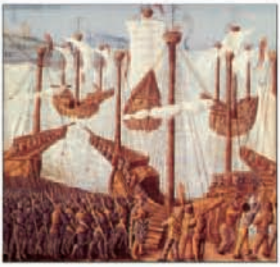
1120 Rebuilding of the abbey of St-Denis; birth of the Gothic style

1154 Angevin Empire created by Anglo-Norman dynasty starting with Henry Plantagenet, count of Anjou and king of England (as Henry II)

1180–1223 Reign of Philip Augustus

1100 **1125** **1150** **1175**

King Philip Augustus, who adopted the fleur-de-lys emblem

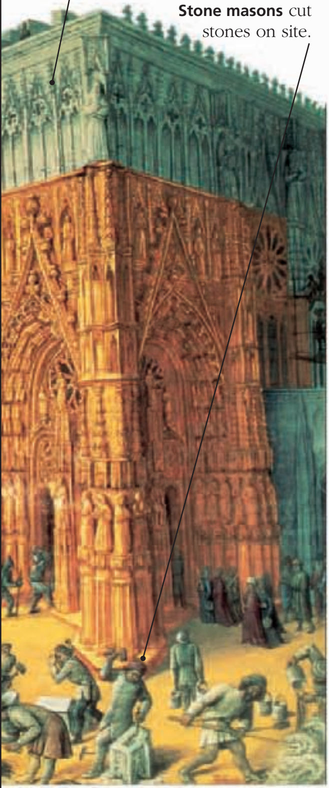


The Crusades *In an attempt to win back the Holy Land from the Turks, Philip Augustus set out on the Third Crusade (1189) alongside England's Richard the Lion-Heart and Holy Roman Emperor Frederick Barbarossa.*

ELEANOR OF AQUITAINE

Strong-willed and vivacious Eleanor, duchess of independent Aquitaine, contributed to the conflict between France and England. In 1137 she married the pious Louis VII of France. Returning from a Crusade, Louis found that their marriage had broken down. After the annulment in 1152, Eleanor married Henry of Anjou, taking her duchy with her. Two years later Henry successfully claimed the throne of England. Aquitaine came under English rule and thus the Angevin Empire began.

Eleanor of Aquitaine *and Henry II are buried in Fontevraud* (p294).



Lacelike sculpture adorned the façades of the Gothic cathedrals.

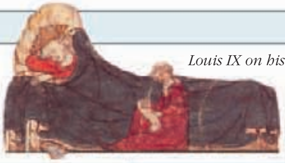
Stone masons cut stones on site.

St. Bernard *(1090–1153) Key figure of the Cistercian rule and counselor to the pope, St. Bernard preached rigorous simplicity of life.*

Holy Relic *Throughout the Middle Ages most churches could boast at least one saint's relic. The cult of relics brought pilgrims and more riches.*

THE BUILDING OF A CATHEDRAL

In affluent, mercantile towns, skilled masons constructed towering Gothic cathedrals of revolutionary design, such as Chartres *(see pp308–11)* and Amiens *(pp202–3)*. With their improbable height and lightness they were a testimony to both faith and prosperity.



Louis IX on his death bed

1200 1225 1250 1275 1300

1214 Battle of Bouvines. Philip Augustus begins to drive the English out of France

1226 Louis IX crowned king

1259 Normandy, Maine, Anjou, and Poitou acquired from England

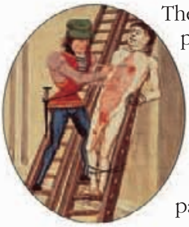
1270 Death of Louis IX at Tunis in the Eighth Crusade

1285 Philip the Fair crowned

1297 Louis IX is canonized, becoming Saint Louis

1305 Papacy established in Avignon

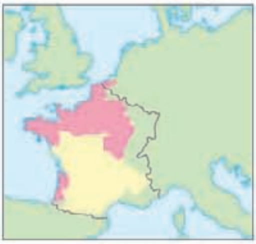
The Hundred Years' War



Public execution, in Froissart's 14th-century chronicle

The Hundred Years' War (1337–1453), pitting England against France for control of French land, had devastating effects. The damage of warfare was amplified by frequent famines and the ravages of bubonic plague in the wake of the Black Death in 1348.

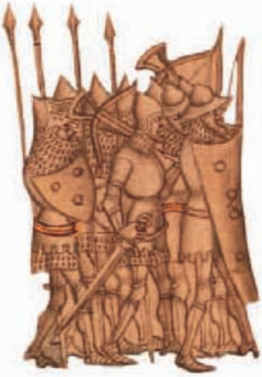
France came close to being permanently partitioned by the king of England and the duke of Burgundy. In 1429–30 the young Joan of Arc helped rally France's fortunes and within a generation the English had been driven out of France.



FRANCE IN 1429

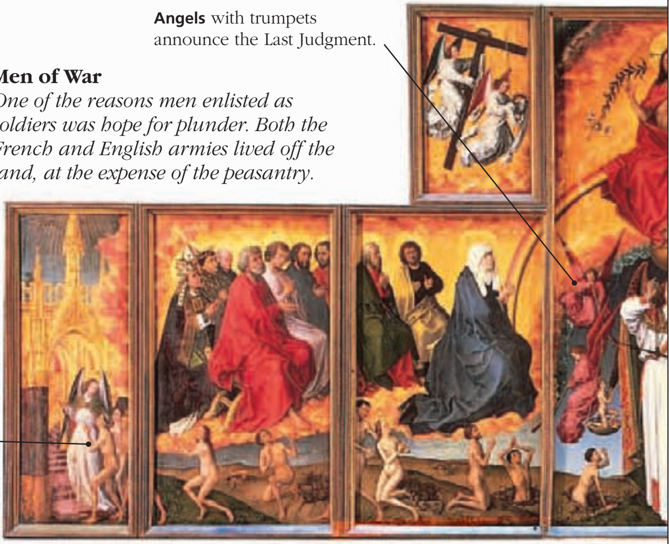
🟨 *France*

🟥 *Anglo-Burgundy*



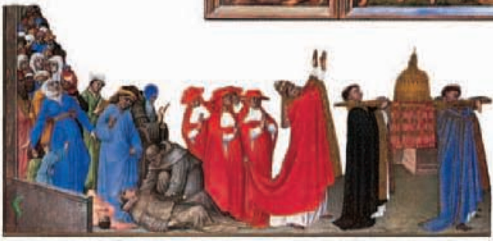
Men of War

One of the reasons men enlisted as soldiers was hope for plunder. Both the French and English armies lived off the land, at the expense of the peasantry.



Angels with trumpets announce the Last Judgment.

The elect, springing resurrected from their graves, are ushered into heaven.



The Black Death

The plague of 1348–52 caused 4–5 million deaths, about 25 percent of the French population. For want of medicines people had to put their faith in prayers and holy processions.

TIMELINE

1325

1328 Philip VI, first Valois monarch

1337 Start of the Hundred Years' War

Plague victims

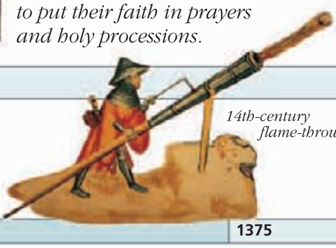
1346 Battle of Crécy: French defeated by English

1350

1348–52 The Black Death

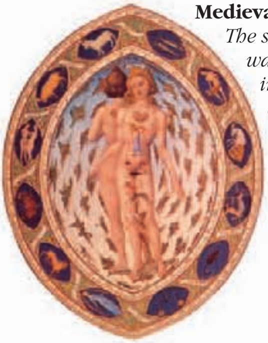
1356 French defeat at Battle of Poitiers

1358 Bourgeois uprising in Paris led by Etienne Marcel. The Jacquerie peasant uprising in Northern France



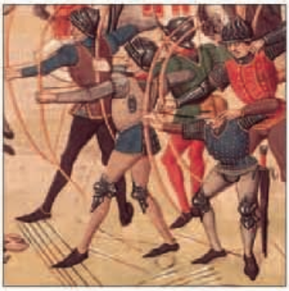
14th-century flame-thrower

1375



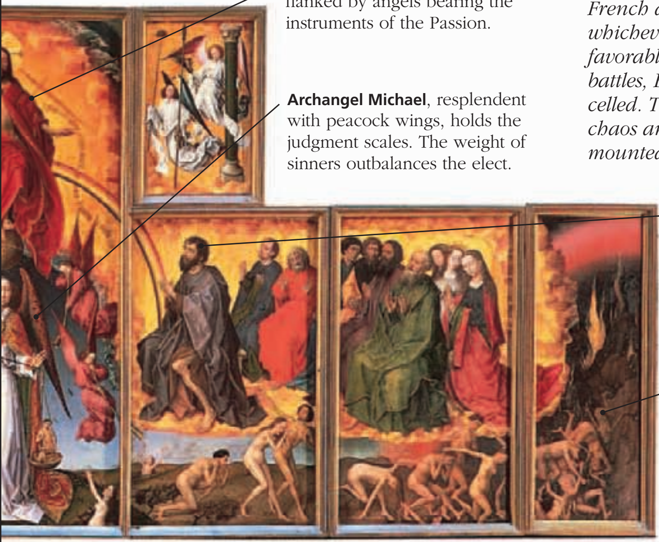
Medieval Medicine

The state of the heavens was widely held to influence earthly conditions, such as health, and a diagnosis based on the zodiac was considered reliable. The standby cure for all sorts of ailments was blood letting.



English Longbow

The king's troops fought against England, but the individual French duchies supported whichever side seemed more favorable. In the confused battles, English bowmen excelled. Their longbows caused chaos among the hordes of mounted French cavalry.



Christ as Supreme Judge is flanked by angels bearing the instruments of the Passion.

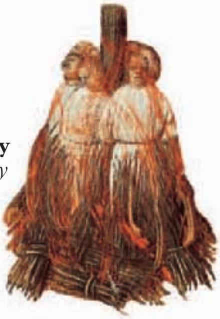
Archangel Michael, resplendent with peacock wings, holds the judgment scales. The weight of sinners outbalances the elect.

John the Baptist is accompanied by the 12 apostles and the Virgin Mary, dressed in blue.

The damned, with hideously twisted faces, fall into Hell.

THE LAST JUDGMENT

With war, plague, and famine as constant visitors, many people feared that the end of the world was nigh. Religious paintings, such as the great 15th-century altarscreen by Rogier van der Weyden in the Hôtel-Dieu in Beaune *(see pp346–7)*, reflected the moral fervor of the time.



Attack on Heresy

The general anxiety spilled over into anti-Semitic pogroms and attacks on alleged heretics, who were burned at the stake.

1400

1411 *Les Très Riches Heures du Duc du Berry* prayer book, by Paul and Jean de Limbourg *(see p204)*

1415 Battle of Agincourt. French defeat by Henry V of England

1419 Charles VI of France makes Henry V of England his heir

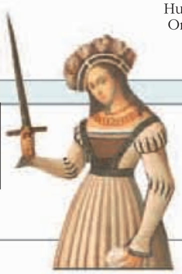
1425

1429 Intervention of Joan of Arc: Charles VII crowned king

1431 Joan of Arc burned at stake as witch by the English

1450

1453 End of the Hundred Years' War. Only Calais remains in English hands

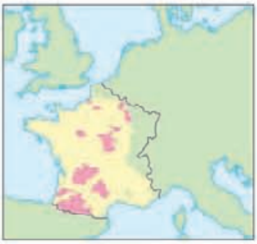


Joan of Arc

Renaissance France

Masked lute player

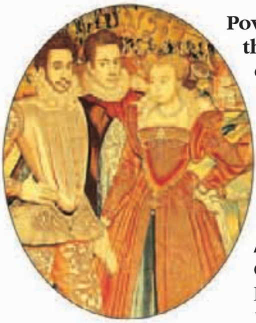
As a result of the French invasion of Italy in 1494, the ideals and aesthetic of the Italian Renaissance spread to France, reaching their height during the reign of François I. Known as a true Renaissance prince, he was skilled in letters and art as well as sports and war. He invited Italian artists, such as Leonardo and Cellini, to his court and enjoyed Rabelais' bawdy stories. Another highly influential Italian was Catherine de' Medici (1519–89). Widow of Henri II, she virtually ruled France through her sons, François II, Charles IX, and Henri III. She was also one of the major players in the Wars of Religion (1562–93) between Catholics and Protestants, which divided the nobility and tore the country to pieces.

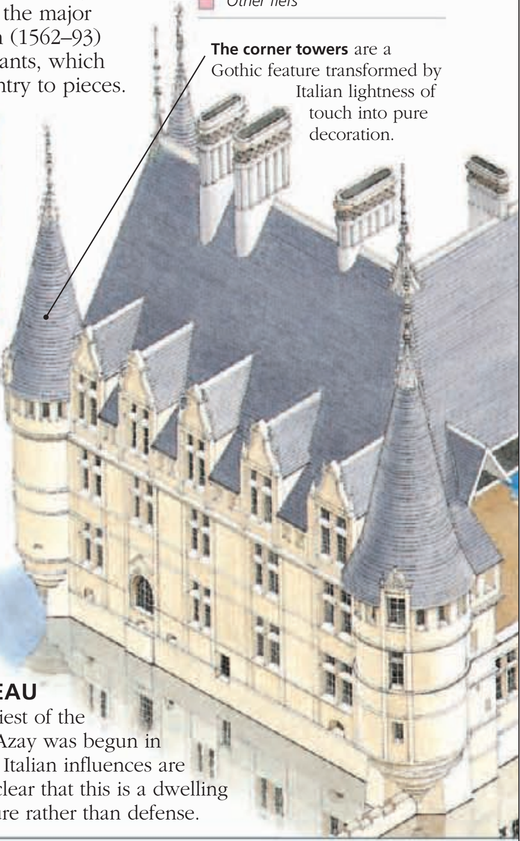

FRANCE IN 1527

🟨 *Royal territory*

🟥 *Other fiefs*

Galerie François I, Fontainebleau
The artists of the School of Fontainebleau blended late Italian Renaissance style with French elements.


Power Behind the Throne
Catherine de' Medici dominated French politics from 1559–89.


The corner towers are a Gothic feature transformed by Italian lightness of touch into pure decoration.

AZAY-LE-RIDEAU
One of the loveliest of the Loire châteaux, Azay was begun in 1518 *(see p296)*. Italian influences are visible and it is clear that this is a dwelling meant for pleasure rather than defense.

TIMELINE

1470 First printing presses established in France

Prototype tank by Leonardo da Vinci

1519 Leonardo da Vinci dies in the arms of François I at the French court in Amboise

1536 Calvin's *Institutes of the Christian Religion* leads to a new form of Protestantism

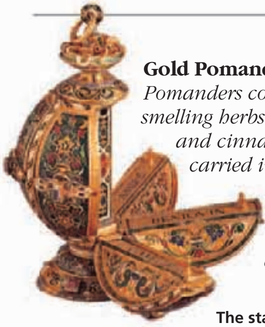
1470 | 1480 | 1490 | 1500 | 1510 | 1520 | 1530

1477 Final defeat of the Dukes of Burgundy, who sought to establish a middle kingdom between France and Germany

1494–1559 France and Austria fight over Italian territories in the Italian Wars

1515 Reign of François I begins

Golden coin showing the fleur-de-lys and the salamander of François I

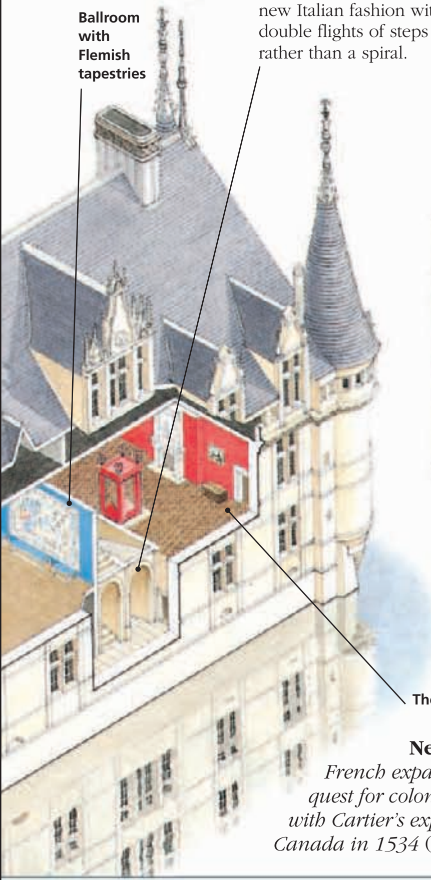


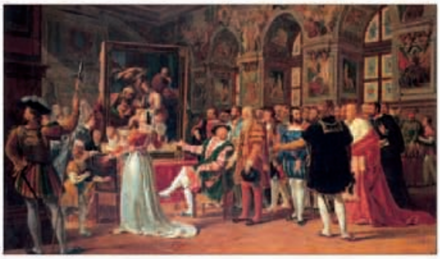
Gold Pomander
Pomanders containing sweet-smelling herbs such as amber and cinnamon were carried in time of plague to ward off the bad air held responsible for contagion.

WHERE TO SEE RENAISSANCE FRANCE

In Paris, many churches and the impressive place des Vosges *(see p91)* date from the Renaissance. There are countless 16th-century châteaux in the Loire and Burgundy. Among the finest are Chenonceau *(pp298–9)* and Tanlay *(p331)*. Salers *(p363)* is a virtually intact Renaissance town. The historic center of Toulouse *(p446)* has many elegant Renaissance palaces.

This fireplace *stands in François I's room at Château de Chenonceau.*


Ballroom with Flemish tapestries
The staircase was in the new Italian fashion with double flights of steps rather than a spiral.
The Red Room



François I and the Italian Influence
François I, here receiving Raphael's painting The Holy Family *in 1518, collected Italian art at Fontainebleau. Among the favored painters were Michelangelo, Leonardo, and Titian.*

New France
French expansion and quest for colonies started with Cartier's expedition to Canada in 1534 (see p282).

1540 1550 1560 1570 1580 1590 1600

1539 Edict of Villers Cotterets makes French the official language of state

1559 Treaty of Cateau–Cambrésis ends the Italian Wars

1562 Wars of Religion between Catholics and Protestants start

1572 Massacre of Protestants on St. Bartholomew's Eve in Paris

St. Bartholomew's Eve Massacre

1589 Henry III murdered. The Huguenot Henry IV becomes first Bourbon king of France

1593 Henry IV converts to Catholicism and ends the Wars of Religion

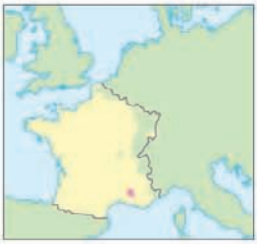
1598 Edict of Nantes: tolerance for Protestantism

1608 Foundation of Quebec

The Grand Siècle

Emblem of the Sun King

The end of the Religious Wars heralded a period of exceptional French influence and power. The cardinal ministers Richelieu and Mazarin paved the way for Louis XIV's absolute monarchy. Political development was matched by artistic styles of unprecedented brilliance: enormous Baroque edifices, the drama of Molière and Racine, and the music of Lully. Versailles *(see pp174–7)*, built under the supervision of Louis' capable finance minister Colbert, was the glory of Europe, but its cost and Louis XIV's endless wars proved expensive for the French state and led to widespread misery by the end of his reign.

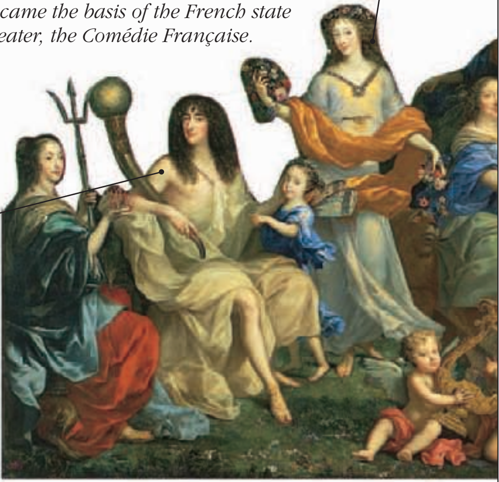


FRANCE IN 1661

🟨	*Royal territory*
🟪	*Avignon (papal enclave)*

OEUVRES
DE
MOLIERE.
NOUVELLE EDITION.
TOME PREMIER.

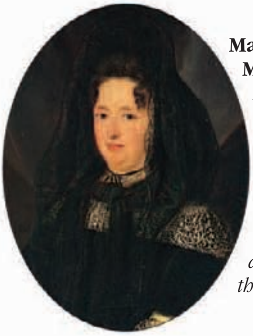
Molière *(1622–73)*
Actor-playwright Molière performed many plays for Louis XIV and his court, though some of his satires were banned. After his death, his company became the basis of the French state theater, the Comédie Française.



Madame (married to Monsieur) as Flora

Monsieur, the king's brother

THE SUN KING AND HIS FAMILY
Claiming to be monarch by divine right, Louis XIV commanded court painter Jean Nocret to devise this allegorical scene in 1665. Surrounded by his family, the king appears as the sun god Apollo.



Madame de Maintenon
In 1684, following the death of his first wife Marie-Thérèse, Louis secretly married his mistress Mme. de Maintenon, then aged 49.

TIMELINE

1610–17 Marie de' Medici acts as Regent for Louis XIII

Cardinal Richelieu

1617 Louis XIII accedes at the age of 17

1624 Cardinal Richelieu becomes principal minister

1631 Foundation of *La Gazette*, France's first newspaper

1634 Foundation of the literary society Académie Française

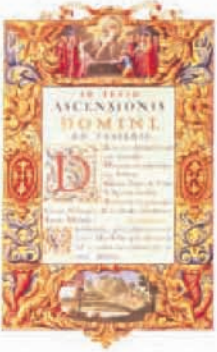
1635 Richelieu actively involves France in the Thirty Years' War

1637 Descartes' *Discourse on Method*

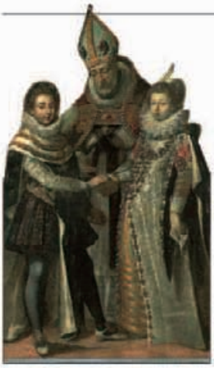
1642–3 Death of Louis XIII and Cardinal Richelieu. Accession of Louis XIV with Mazarin as principal minister

1648–52 The Fronde: French civil wars

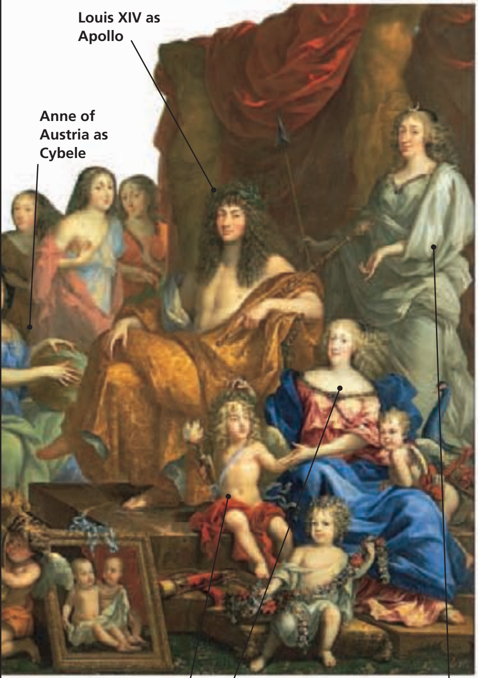
1610 1620 1630 1640 1650



Louis XIV's Book of Hours *After a lively and libertine youth, Louis became increasingly religious. His* Book of Hours *(1688–93) is in Musée Condé* (see p205).



Royal Wedding *Louis XIII and Anne of Austria were married in 1615. After his death, Anne became regent for the young Louis XIV with Cardinal Mazarin as minister.*


Louis XIV as Apollo
Anne of Austria as Cybele
The dauphin (the king's son)
Queen Marie-Thérèse as Juno
Grande Mademoiselle, the king's cousin, as Diana

Baroque Figurine *The royal glory was reflected in the arts. This* objet d'art *features a Christ in jasper on a pedestal decorated with gilded cherubs and rich enameling.*

WHERE TO SEE ARCHITECTURE OF THE GRAND SIÈCLE

Paris boasts many imposing Grand Siècle buildings, such as the Hôtel des Invalides *(see p114)*, the Dôme church *(p115)*, and the Palais du Luxembourg *(pp126–7)*, but the Château de Versailles *(pp174–7)* is the ultimate example of the flamboyance of the period. Reminders of this glory include the sumptuous Palais Lascaris in Nice *(p528)* and the Corderie Royale in Rochefort *(p417)*. At the same time, military architect Vauban constructed mighty citadels, such as Neuf-Brisach *(see p226)*.

Versailles' *interior is a typical example of the gilded Baroque style.*

Playwright Jean Racine (1639–99)

1661 Death of Mazarin: Louis XIV becomes his own principal minister

1662 Colbert, finance minister, reforms finances and the economy

1680 Creation of the theater Comédie Française

1682 Royal court moves to Versailles

1685 Revocation of the Edict of Nantes of 1598: Protestantism banned

1686 Opening of the Café Procope (first coffee house in Paris)

1689 Major wars of Louis XIV begin

1709 Last great famine in French history

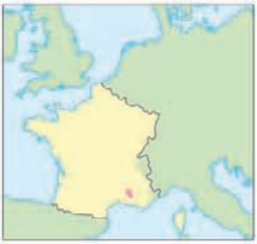
1660 | 1670 | 1680 | 1690 | 1700

17th-century cannon

Enlightenment and Revolution

Plate of Louis XVI's execution

In the 18th century, Enlightenment philosophers such as Voltaire and Rousseau redefined man's place within a framework of natural principles, thus challenging the old aristocratic order. Their essays were read across Europe and even in the American colonies. But although France exported worldly items as well as ideas, the state's increasing debts brought social turmoil, triggering the 1789 Revolution. Under the motto "Liberty, Equality, Fraternity," the new Republic and its reforms had a far-reaching impact on the rest of Europe.

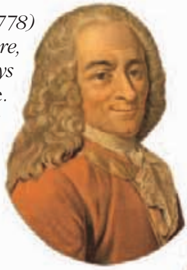


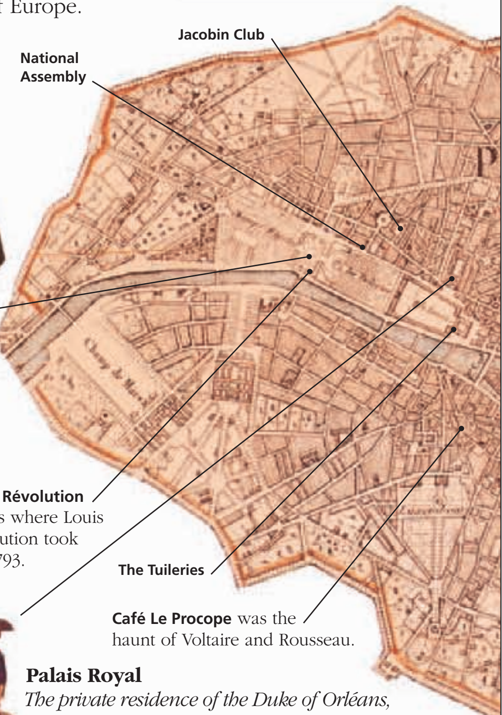
FRANCE IN 1789

🟨 *Royal France*

🟥 *Avignon (papal enclave)*

Voltaire *(1694–1778)*
Voltaire, master of satire, wrote numerous essays and the novel Candide. *His fierce critiques sometimes forced him into exile abroad.*





Jacobin Club

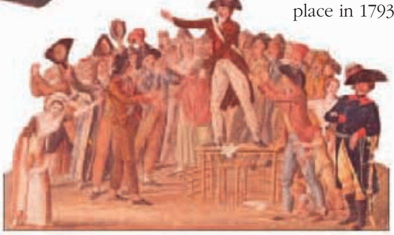
National Assembly

The Guillotine
This infamous invention was introduced in 1792 as a humane alternative to other forms of capital punishment, which had usually involved torture.

Place de la Révolution *(see p98)* is where Louis XVI's execution took place in 1793.

The Tuileries

Café Le Procope was the haunt of Voltaire and Rousseau.

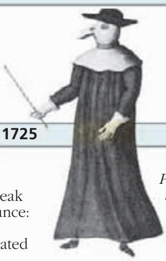


Palais Royal
The private residence of the Duke of Orléans, the Palais Royal (see p99) *became a center of revolutionary agitation from 1789. It was also the site of several printing presses.*

TIMELINE

1715 Death of Louis XIV, accession of Louis XV

1720 Last outbreak of plague in France: population of Marseille decimated



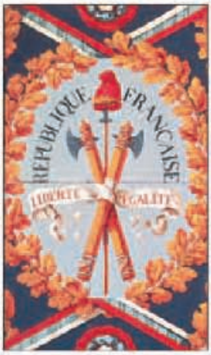
Physician's protective costume worn during the plague

1743–64 Mme. de Pompadour, Louis XV's favorite, uses her influence to support artists and philosophers during her time at court

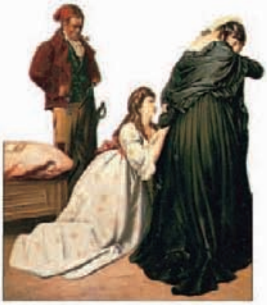
1751 Publication of the first volume of Diderot's *Encyclopaedia*

1756–63 Seven Years' War: France loses Canada and other colonial possessions

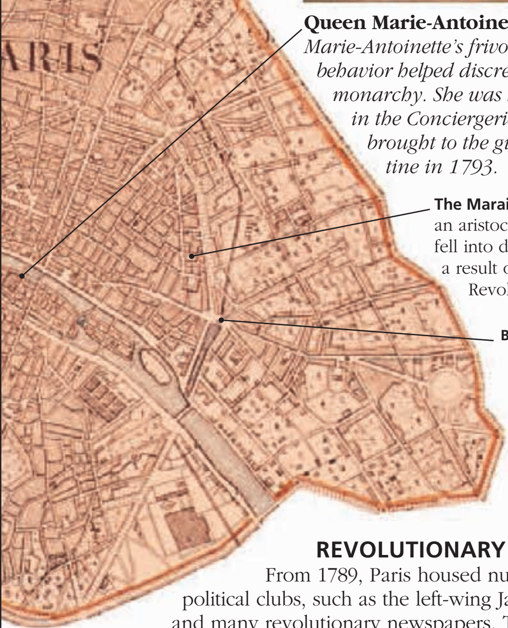
1715 1725 1735 1745 1755



Revolutionary Symbols
The motifs of the Revolution such as the blue, white, and red of the tricolor even appeared on wallpaper in the 1790s.



Queen Marie-Antoinette
Marie-Antoinette's frivolous behavior helped discredit the monarchy. She was held in the Conciergerie and brought to the guillotine in 1793.



The Marais, earlier an aristocratic area, fell into decay as a result of the Revolution.

Bastille

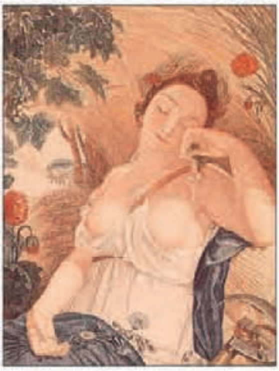
REVOLUTIONARY PARIS

From 1789, Paris housed numerous political clubs, such as the left-wing Jacobins, and many revolutionary newspapers. The war tune *La Marseillaise,* introduced by volunteers from the south, was soon heard everywhere.

WHERE TO SEE 18TH-CENTURY FRANCE

The Palais de l'Elysée, built in 1718 *(see p108)*, is an outstanding example of 18th-century Parisian architecture. Examples across France include the curious Saline Royale in Arc-et-Senans *(p350)*, the Grand Théâtre in Bordeaux *(p422)*, the elegant mansions in Condom *(p440)*, and the merchants' houses in Ciboure *(p453)*. The Château de Laàs in Sauveterre de Béarn is a feast of 18th-century art and furniture *(p454)*.

The Grand Théâtre *in Bordeaux is an excellent example of elegant 18th-century architecture.*



Revolutionary Calendar
A new calendar was introduced, the months named after seasonal events. This engraving shows Messidor, the month of harvest.

1762 Rousseau's *Emile* and the *Social Contract*

1765

1768 Annexation of Corsica

1774 Accession of Louis XVI

1775

1778–83 France aids the 13 colonies in the War of American Independence

1783 First balloon ascent by the Montgolfier brothers

1785

1789 Storming of the Bastille, and establishment of constitutional monarchy: abolition of feudal laws

Electors' card for the Convention of 1792

1792 Overthrow of Louis XVI: establishment of First Republic

Model of the Bastille

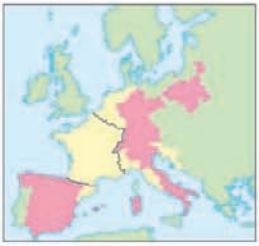
1794 Overthrow of Robespierre and end of the Terror

1795

Napoleonic France

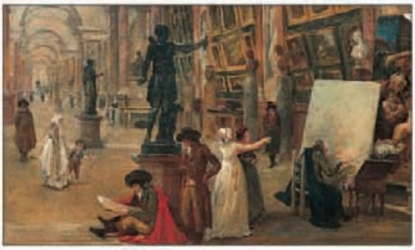
Légion d'Honneur

Two generations of Napoleons dominated France from 1800 to 1870. Napoleon Bonaparte took the title of Emperor Napoleon I. He extended his empire throughout most of western Europe, placing his brothers and sisters on the thrones of conquered countries. Defeated in 1814 and replaced by the restored Bourbon dynasty, followed by the 1830 Revolution and the so-called July Monarchy, the Napoleonic clan made a comeback after 1848. Napoleon I's nephew, Louis Napoleon, became President of the Second Republic, then made himself emperor as Napoleon III. During his reign Paris was modernized and the industrial transformation of France began.

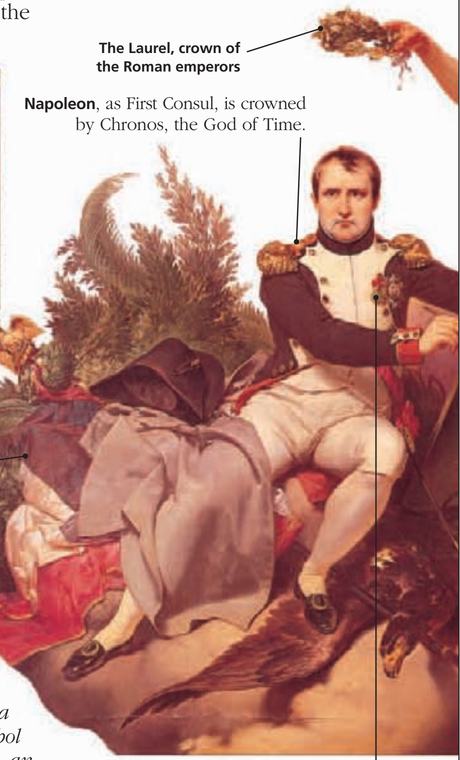


EUROPE IN 1812

- 🟨 *Napoleonic rule*
- 🟥 *Dependent states*



Musée du Louvre
The museum had opened in 1792, but it flourished during Napoleon's reign. He took a personal interest in both acquisitions and organization.

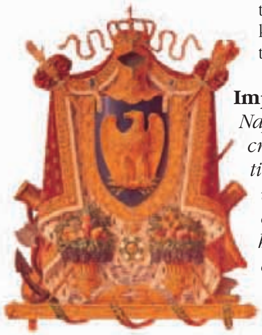


The Laurel, crown of the Roman emperors

Napoleon, as First Consul, is crowned by Chronos, the God of Time.

The revolutionary tricolor flag was kept throughout the empire.

Légion d'Honneur medal



Imperial Insignia
Napoleon I created a new titled aristocracy, who were allowed coats of arms. Only his, however, was permitted a crown. The eagle symbol was adopted in 1800, an evocation of Imperial Rome.

TIMELINE

1800 Establishment of the Bank of France

1802 Treaty of Amiens brings temporary peace to Europe

1802 Establishment of the Légion d'Honneur

1803 Resumption of wars to create the Napoleonic Empire

1804 Napoleon crowned as Emperor. Napoleonic Civil Code established

Josephine's bed at Malmaison

1806 Arc de Triomphe commissioned

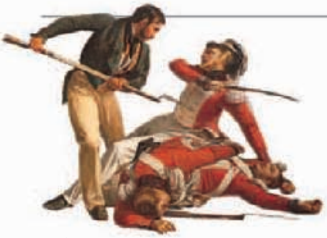
1809 Josephine and Napoleon divorce. She retains Château Malmaison *(see p173)*

1810

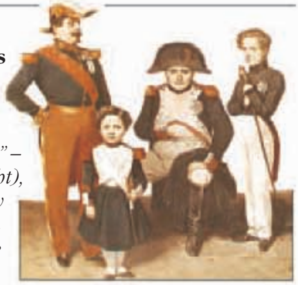
1814 Defeat of Napoleon by the Allies (England, Russia, Austria, and Prussia). Napoleon exiled to Elba

1815 The "Hundred Days": Napoleon returns from Elba, is defeated at Waterloo and exiled to St. Helena

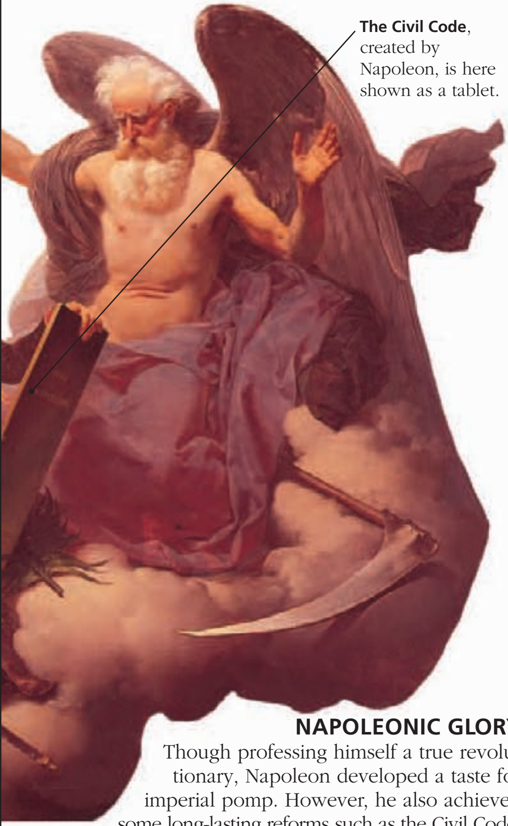
1820



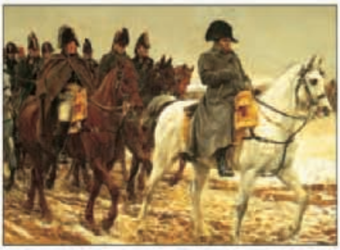
July Revolution
Three days of street-fighting in July 1830 ended unpopular Bourbon rule.



The Napoleons
This imaginary group portrait depicts Napoleon I (seated), his son "Napoleon II" – who never ruled (right), Napoleon's nephew Louis Napoleon (Napoleon III), and the latter's infant son.



The Civil Code, created by Napoleon, is here shown as a tablet.



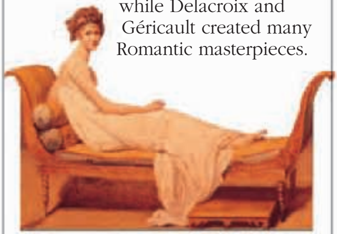
Napoleon on Campaign
A dashing general in the late 1790s, Napoleon remained a remarkable military commander throughout his reign.

NAPOLEONIC GLORY

Though professing himself a true revolutionary, Napoleon developed a taste for imperial pomp. However, he also achieved some long-lasting reforms such as the Civil Code, the new school system, and the Bank of France.

EMPIRE FASHION

Greek and Roman ideals were evident in architecture, furniture, design, and fashion. Women wore light, Classical tunics, the most daring with one shoulder or more bare. David and Gérard were the fashionable portraitists, while Delacroix and Géricault created many Romantic masterpieces.



Madame Récamier *held a popular salon and was renowned for her beauty and wit. David painted her in 1800.*

1832 Cholera epidemics begin

1838 Daguerre experiments with photography

1848 Revolution of 1848: end of July Monarchy and establishment of the Second Republic

1851 Coup d'état by Louis Napoleon

1852 Louis Napoleon crowned as Emperor Napoleon III

1830 1840 1850 1860

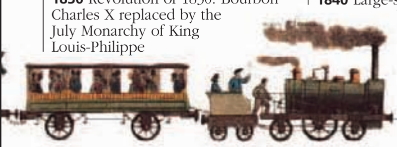
1830 Revolution of 1830: Bourbon Charles X replaced by the July Monarchy of King Louis-Philippe

1840 Large-scale railroad building

1853 Modernization of Paris by Haussmann

1857 Baudelaire *(Les Fleurs du Mal)* and Flaubert *(Mme. Bovary)* prosecuted for public immorality

1859–60 Annexation of Nice and Savoy

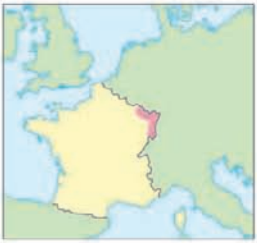


Train on the Paris – St-Germain line

The Belle Epoque

Art Nouveau vase by Lalique

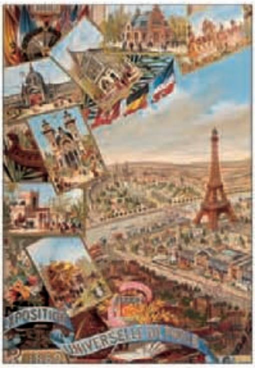
The decades before World War I became the *Belle Epoque* for the French, remembered as a golden era forever past. Nevertheless this was a politically turbulent time, with working-class militancy, organized socialist movements, and the Dreyfus Affair polarizing the country between Left and anti-semitic Right. New inventions such as electricity and vaccination against disease made life easier at all social levels. The cultural scene thrived and took new forms with Impressionism and Art Nouveau, the realist novels of Gustave Flaubert and Emile Zola, cabaret and cancan, and, in 1895, the birth of the cinema.



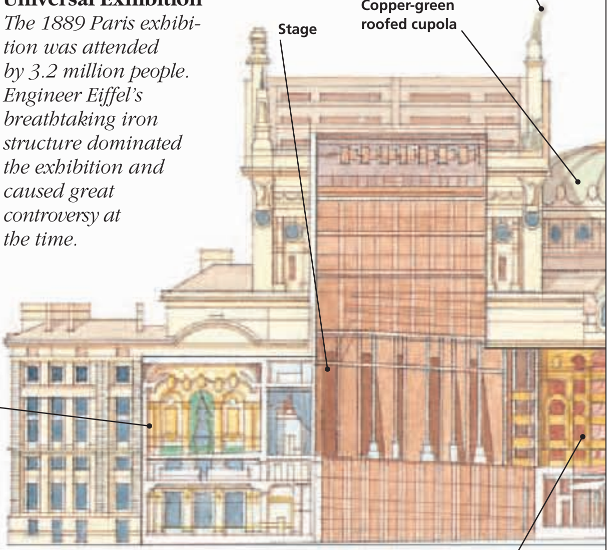
FRANCE IN 1871

🟨 *Under Third Republic*

🟥 *Alsace and Lorraine*



Universal Exhibition *The 1889 Paris exhibition was attended by 3.2 million people. Engineer Eiffel's breathtaking iron structure dominated the exhibition and caused great controversy at the time.*



The auditorium in gold and purple seated over 2,000 guests.

Peugeot Car *(1899) The car and bicycle brought new freedom, becoming a part of people's leisure time. Peugeot, Renault, and Citroën were all founded before World War I.*

TIMELINE

Woman on the barricades in 1871

1869 Opening of the Suez Canal, built by Ferdinand de Lesseps

1871 The Paris Commune leads to the Third Republic

1880s Scramble for colonies in Africa and Asia begins

1889 Universal Exhibition in Paris; Eiffel Tower built

1865 **1870** **1875** **1880** **1885** **1890**

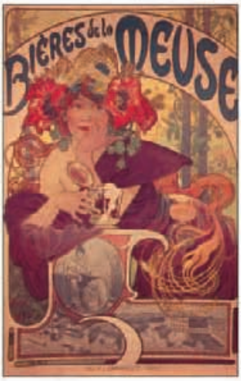
1870–71 Franco-Prussian War: defeat and overthrow of Napoleon III; France cedes Alsace and Lorraine to Germany

1874 Impressionist movement begins

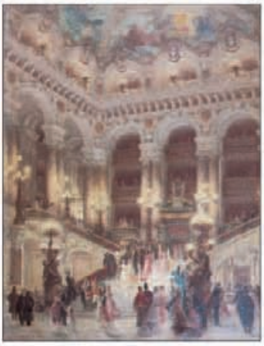
1881–6 Reforms in education by Jules Ferry

1885 Pasteur produces vaccine for rabies, the first tested on a human

1890 Peugeot constructs one of the earliest automobiles



Poster Art
The poster was revolutionized by Art Nouveau, with designs by Alphonse Mucha particularly popular. This one from 1897 is for beer, the beverage of the lost Alsace and Lorraine, which became a "patriotic" drink.



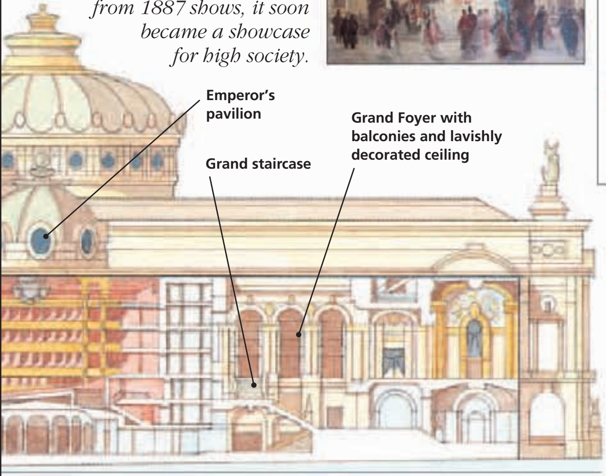
Staircase at the Opera
The grand staircase had colored marble columns and a frescoed ceiling. As this painting by Beroud from 1887 shows, it soon became a showcase for high society.

WHERE TO SEE THE BELLE EPOQUE

Belle Epoque buildings include the Negresco Hotel, Nice *(see p526)*, the Grand Casino in Monte-Carlo *(p530)*, and the Palais Hotel in Biarritz *(p452)*. The Musée d'Orsay in Paris *(pp120–21)* exhibits Art Nouveau objects and furniture.

METROPOLITAIN

Guimard's *Metro entrance is a typical example of the elegant, swirling lines of Art Nouveau.*



OPERA NATIONAL GARNIER

Founded by Napoleon III in 1862, the new opera was opened to great public acclaim in 1875 and became a focus of Belle Epoque social life. Designed by Charles Garnier, its extravagant exterior was matched by its sumptuous interior decor.

The Divine Sarah
Actress Sarah Bernhardt (1844–1923) worked in all theatrical genres, dominating the Paris stage.

1895 First public cinema by the Lumière brothers

1894–1906 The alleged treason of Dreyfus sparks the Dreyfus Affair, involving the author Zola among others

GRAND GUIGNOL

Caricature of Zola

1909 Blériot flies the Channel

1916 Battle of Verdun

1917 Mutinies in the army suppressed by Pétain

1918 Germany asks for armistice to end war

1895 **1900** **1905** **1910** **1915**

MONACO
65 + 25
CURIE

1898 Marie and Pierre Curie discover radium

1905 Official separation of church and state

1913 Publication of Proust's first volume of *Remembrance of Things Past*

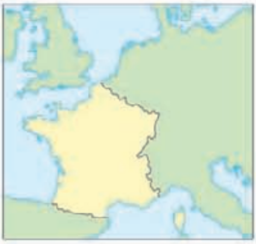
1914 World War I breaks out

French recruit, 1916

1919 Treaty of Versailles

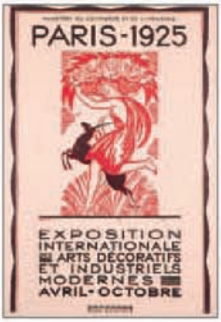
Avant-Garde France

Despite the devastation wrought by two world wars, France retained its international renown as a center for the avant garde. Paris in particular was a magnet for experimental writers, artists, and musicians. The cafés were full of American authors and jazz musicians, French surrealists, and film makers. The French Riveria also attracted colonies of artists and writers, from Matisse and Picasso to Hemingway and F. Scott Fitzgerald, along with the wealthy industrialists and aristocrats arriving in automobiles or the famous Train Bleu. And from 1936 paid vacations meant that the working classes could also enjoy the new fashion for sunbathing.

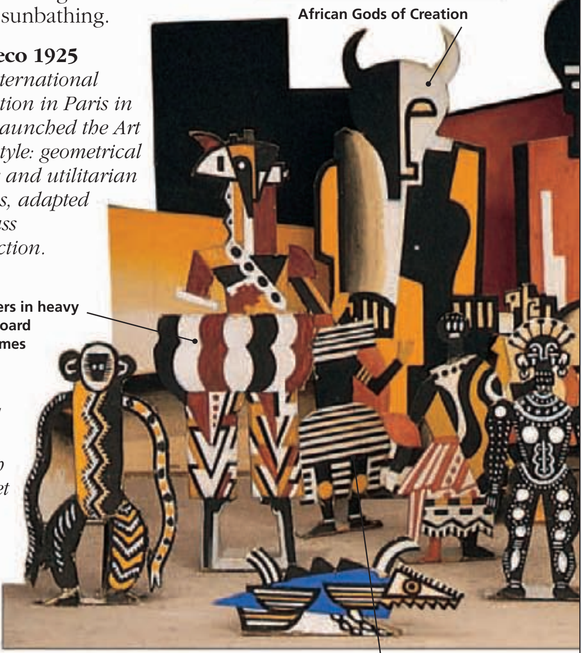


FRANCE IN 1919

🟨 *French territory*


PARIS-1925
EXPOSITION INTERNATIONALE DES ARTS DECORATIFS ET INDUSTRIELS MODERNES
AVRIL-OCTOBRE

Art Deco 1925 *The International Exhibition in Paris in 1925 launched the Art Deco style: geometrical shapes and utilitarian designs, adapted for mass production.*



African Gods of Creation

Dancers in heavy cardboard costumes

The costumes and scenery by the Cubist Léger were striking and made to look partly mechanical.

The Jazz Age *Paris welcomed American jazz musicians, such as Sidney Bechet in 1925 and Dizzy Gillespie (left), co-founder of Bebop in the 1940s.*

Citroën Goddess *(1956) This elegant model became an icon of the new French consumerism evident in the 1950s and '60s.*

TIMELINE

1920 French Communist Party founded. Publication of Tristan Tzara's Dadaist Manifesto

1928 Premiere of *Un Chien Andalou* by Luis Buñuel and Salvador Dalí

Air France aircraft, 1937

1933 Air France begins operation

1937 Premiere of *La Grande Illusion* by Jean Renoir

1920

1930

1924 Olympic Games in Paris. André Breton publishes the *Surrealist Manifesto*

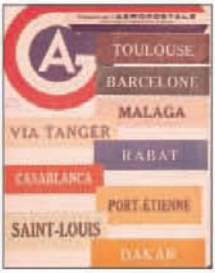
Detail of poster for the 1924 Olympics

1929–39 The Depression

1936–38 The "Popular Front": radical social program introduced, including paid vacations

1938 Munich Conference: height of appeasement

Coco Chanel *(1883–1971)*
Chanel, here photographed by Man Ray, revolutionized fashion in the 1920s with her elegant but comfortable clothes.

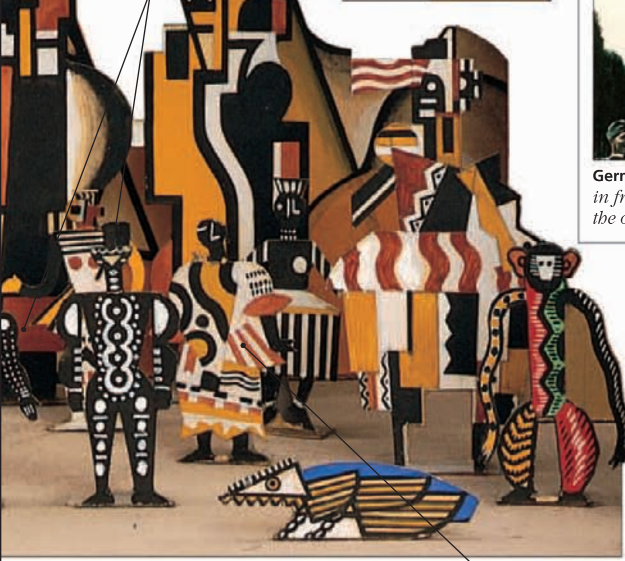


Par Avion
France pioneered the use of airmail, starting in 1927.

WORLD WAR II

Following the collapse of the Third Republic in 1940, Paris and the north and west parts of France were occupied by the Germans until the Liberation in 1944. Southeast France formed the collaborationist Vichy state, led by Marshal Pétain and Pierre Laval. Meanwhile, the Free French movement was led by Charles de Gaulle, with Jean Moulin coordinating the operations of the many different Resistance factions.

German soldiers *liked to pose in front of the Eiffel Tower during the occupation of Paris.*

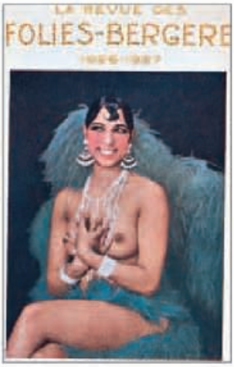


First Man and Woman

The African theme was based on text by Blaise Cendrars.

LA CREATION DU MONDE *(1923)*

Artistic experimentation thrived in the early 20th century. *La Création du Monde* by Les Ballets Suédois had costumes by Léger and music by Milhaud. Diaghilev's Ballets Russes also competed for avant-garde artists like Picabia, Cocteau, Satie, and Sonia Delaunay.



Josephine Baker *(1906–75)*
The music hall flourished in the 1920s with Mistinguett and Josephine Baker as its undisputed queens.

1940 The Fall of France. Vichy government led by Pétain. De Gaulle fights on from London

1949 Establishment of NATO. Founding of the Council of Europe

1942 The whole of France controlled by Germany

1956 Late in her career, Edith Piaf crowns her success at Carnegie Hall, New York

1958 5th Republic begins under President de Gaulle

1940 **1950**

1944 D-Day: Allied landings in Normandy (June). Liberation of Paris (August)

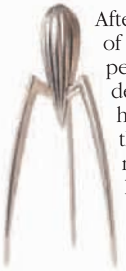
1946 Sartre establishes *Les Temps Modernes*. First Cannes Film Festival

1954 France withdraws from Indo-China after Battle of Dien Bien Phu. Start of Algerian insurrection

1939 Declaration of World War II

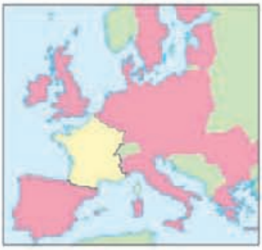
1945 End of the war. 4th Republic begins. Votes for women

Modern France



Lemon squeezer by Philippe Starck

After the 1950s, the traditional foundations of French society changed: the number of peasant farmers plummeted, old industries decayed, jobs in the service sector and hi-tech industries grew dramatically, and the French came to enjoy the benefits of mass culture and widespread consumerism. High prestige projects, such as Concorde, TGV, La Défense, and the Pompidou Center, brought international acclaim. Efforts for European integration and the inauguration of the Channel Tunnel aim toward closer relations with France's neighbors.

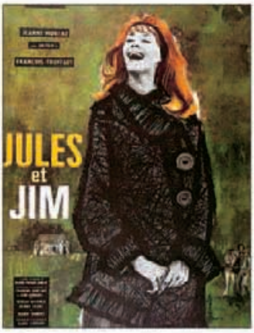


FRANCE TODAY

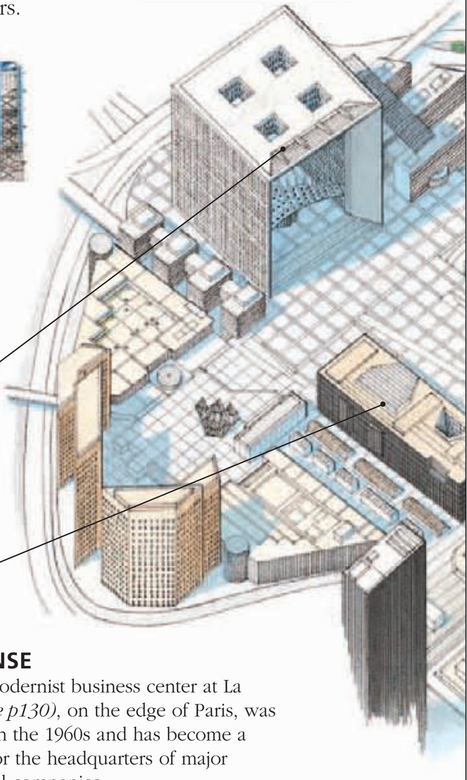
🟨 *France*

🟥 *European Union*

Pompidou Center *(1977)*
The Pompidou Center's controversial building changed the aspect of the historic quarter of Beaubourg. A major arts center, it has revitalized the formerly rundown area (see pp92–3).



New Wave Film
Directors like Godard and Truffaut launched a refreshing, personal style of films, such as Jules et Jim *(1961).*



La Grande Arche was opened in 1989 to commemorate the bicentennial of the Revolution.

Shopping center

LA DÉFENSE

The huge modernist business center at La Défense *(see p130)*, on the edge of Paris, was developed in the 1960s and has become a prime site for the headquarters of major multinational companies.

TIMELINE

1960 First French atomic bomb. Decolonization of black Africa

1967 Common Agricultural Policy, subsidizing Europe's farmers

1973 Extension of the Common Market (EU) from six to nine states

1974 Giscard d'Estaing elected president

1980 Giverny, Monet's garden, opens to the public *(see p266)*

1981 Socialist Mitterrand becomes president for 14 years

1989 Bicentennial celebration of the French Revolution

1960 | **1970** | **1980**

1962 Evian agreements lead to Algerian independence

1963 First French nuclear power station

1968 May demonstrations

1969 Pompidou replaces de Gaulle as president

1976 Concorde's first commercial flight

1977 Jacques Chirac first mayor of Paris since 1871. Opening of the Pompidou Center

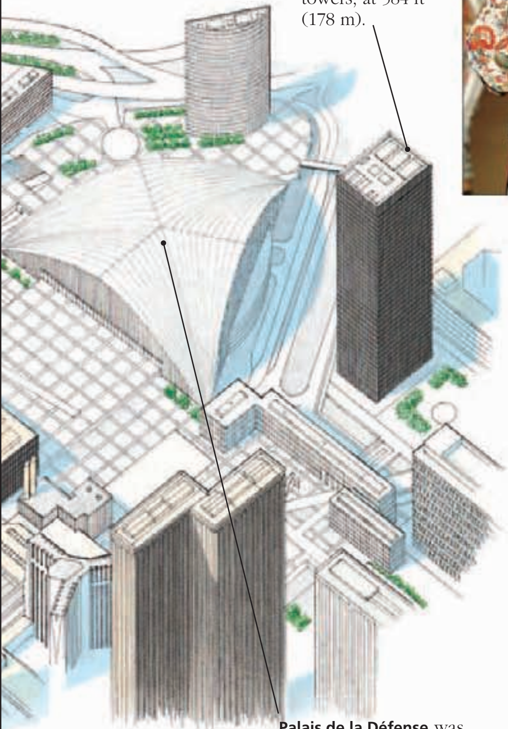
1987 Mitterrand and Thatcher sign agreement for Channel Tunnel. Trial in Lyon of ex-SS Officer Klaus Barbie

François Mitterrand

EU Flag
France has been one of the leading forces in the European Union ever since the move toward closer European collaboration began in the 1950s.

TGV
The TGV (Train à Grande Vitesse) is one of the world's fastest trains (see pp682–3). *It typifies the French government's commitment to high technology and improved communications.*

Fashion by Lacroix
Despite less demand for haute couture, *Paris is still a major fashion center. The designs shown on the catwalk, here by Christian Lacroix, remain proof of the world-renowned skills of French designers.*



The Areva (Fiat) Tower is one of Europe's tallest towers, at 584 ft (178 m).

Palais de la Défense was built first and houses the center for industry.

MAY 1968

The events of May 1968 began as a political revolt by left-wing students against the Establishment and had a profound influence on French society. Around 9 million workers, and leading intellectuals like Jean-Paul Sartre, joined the rebellion, demanding better pay, better study conditions, and the overhaul of traditional values and institutions.

Student riots *starting in Nanterre, just outside Paris, sparked widespread rioting and industrial unrest in France.*

1990

1991 Edith Cresson is first woman prime minister

1994 Channel Tunnel opens

1996 Mitterrand dies after a long illness

2000

2002 National Front defeat Socialists in 1st round of presidential campaign. France re-elects Jacques Chirac

2002 Euro replaces franc as legal tender

Prince Albert II

2005 Prince Rainier III of Monaco dies and is succeeded by his only son, Prince Albert II

2007 Center-right Nicolas Sarkozy elected president

2008 Jean-Marie Gustave Le Clézio wins the Nobel Prize for literature

2010

2020

Kings and Emperors of France

Following the break-up of the Roman Empire, the Frankish king Clovis consolidated the Merovingian dynasty. It was followed by the Carolingians, and from the 10th century by Capetian rulers. The Capetians established royal power, which passed to the Valois branch in the 14th century, and then to the Bourbons in the late 16th century, following the Wars of Religion. The Revolution of 1789 seemed to end the Bourbon dynasty, but it made a brief come-back in 1814–30. The 19th century was dominated by the Bonapartes, Napoleon I and Napoleon III. Since the overthrow of Napoleon III in 1870, France has been a republic.

768–814 Charlemagne

447–458 Merovich

458–482 Childéric I

482–511 Clovis I

511–558 Childebert I

558–562 Clothaire I

562–566 Caribert

566–584 Chilpéric I

584–628 Clothaire II

628–637 Dagobert I

637–655 Clovis II

655–668 Clothaire III

668–674 Childéric II

674–691 Thierri III

691–695 Clovis III

695–711 Childebert II

711–716 Dagobert III

716–721 Chilpéric II

721–737 Thierri IV

743–751 Childéric III

751–768 Pépin the Short

814–840 Louis I, the Pious

840–877 Charles I, the Bald

877–879 Louis II, the Stammerer

879–882 Louis III

882–884 Carloman

884–888 Charles II, the Fat

888–898 Odo, Count of Paris

898–929 Charles III, the Simple

936–954 Louis IV, the Foreigner

954–986 Lothaire

986–987 Louis V

987–996 Hugh Capet

996–1031 Robert II, the Pious

1031–60 Henri I

1060–1108 Philippe I

1108–37 Louis VI, the Fat

1137–80 Louis VII

400 500 600 700 800 900 1000 1100

MEROVINGIAN DYNASTY

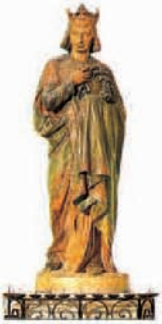
CAROLINGIAN DYNASTY

CAPETIAN DYNASTY

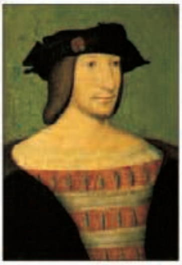
400 500 600 700 800 900 1000 1100

482–511 Clovis I

1108–37 Louis VI, the Fat



1226–70 Louis IX (St-Louis)



1515–47 François I

1498–1515 Louis XII, Father of his People

1483–98 Charles VIII

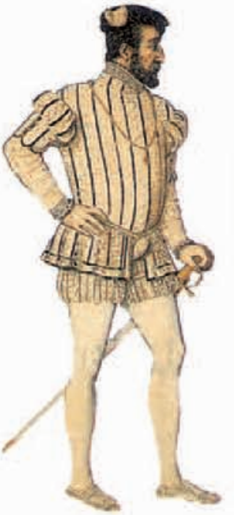
1422–61 Charles VII, the Victorious

1270–85 Philippe III

1285–1314 Philippe IV, the Fair

1316–22 Philippe V

1328–50 Philippe VI

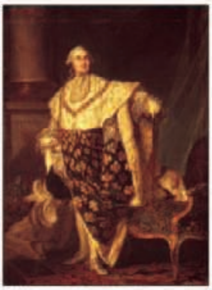


1547–59 Henri II

1559–60 François II

1610–43 Louis XIII

1643–1715 Louis XIV, the Sun King



1774–92 Louis XVI

1804–14 Napoleon I

1200 1300 1400 1500 1600 1700 1800

VALOIS DYNASTY BOURBON DYNASTY

1200 1300 1400 1500 1600 1700 1800

1314–16 Louis X

1322–28 Charles IV, the Fair

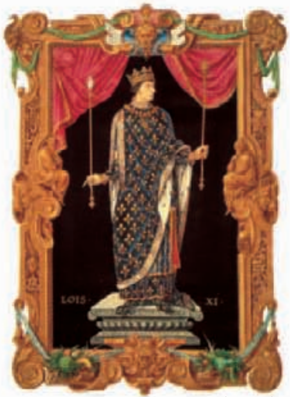
1223–6 Louis VIII

1180–1223 Philip Augustus

1380–1422 Charles VI, the Fool

1364–80 Charles V, the Wise

1350–64 Jean II, the Good

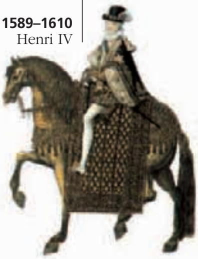


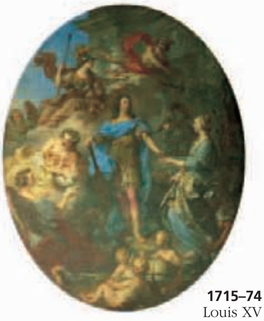
1461–83 Louis XI, the Spider

1560–74 Charles IX

1574–89 Henri III

1589–1610 Henri IV





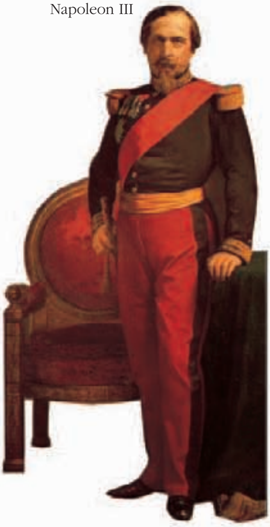
1715–74 Louis XV

1814–24 Louis XVIII

1824–30 Charles X

1830–48 Louis-Philippe I

1852–70 Napoleon III



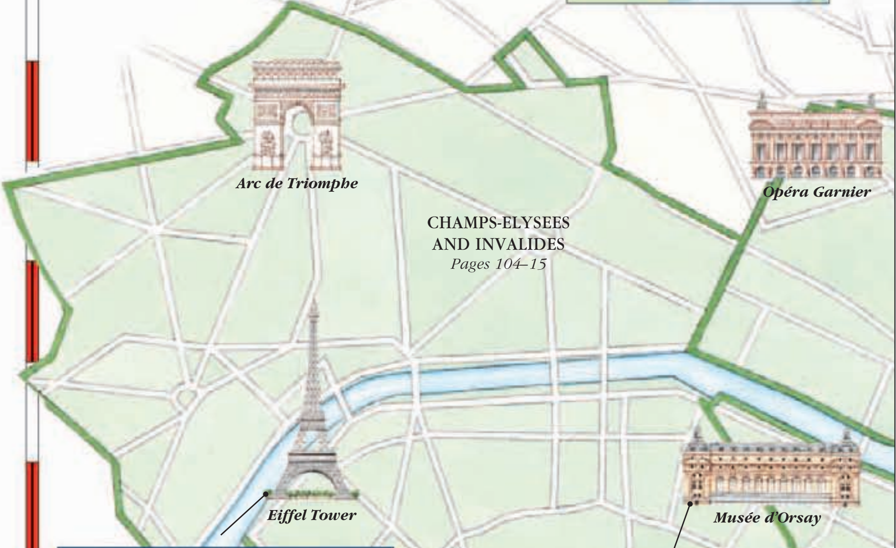
PARIS AND ILE DE FRANCE

INTRODUCING PARIS AND ILE DE FRANCE 72–73
A RIVER VIEW OF PARIS 74–79
ILE DE LA CITE, MARAIS, AND BEAUBOURG 80–93
TUILERIES AND OPERA 94–103
CHAMPS-ELYSEES AND INVALIDES 104–115
THE LEFT BANK 116–127
FARTHER AFIELD 128–139
SHOPS AND MARKETS 140–149
ENTERTAINMENT IN PARIS 150–153
PARIS STREET FINDER 154–169
ILE DE FRANCE 170–181

Introducing Paris and Ile de France

The French capital is rich in museums, art galleries, and monuments. The Louvre, Eiffel Tower, and Pompidou Center are among the most popular sights.

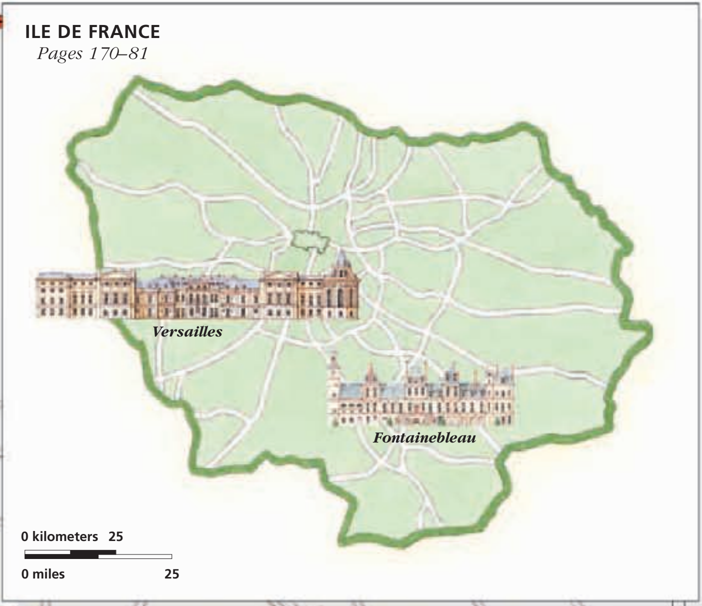
Surrounding Paris, the Ile de France takes in 4,600 sq miles (12,000 sq km) of busy suburbs and commuter towns punctuated by châteaux, the most celebrated being Versailles. Farther out, suburbia gives way to farmland, forests, and the magnificent palace of Fontainebleau.

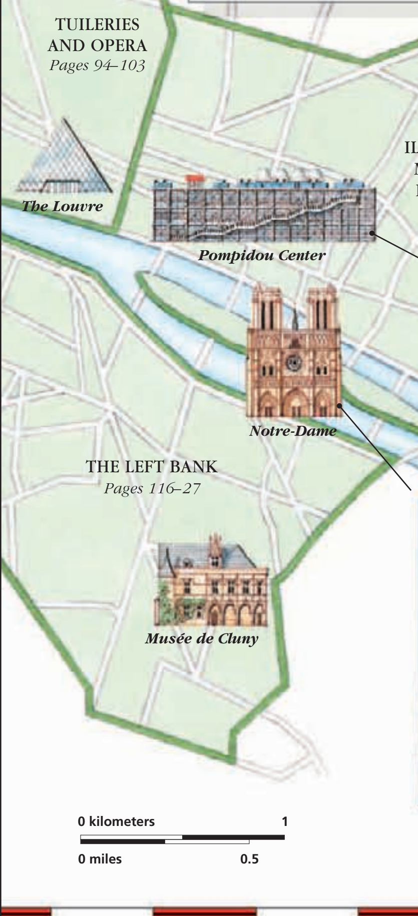


The Eiffel Tower, *designed for the Universal Exhibition of 1889, scandalized contemporary critics but is now the capital's most famous landmark* (see p113).

The Musée d'Orsay, *opened in 1986, was created from a late 19th-century railroad terminus* (see pp120–1). *Its magnificent collection of 19th- and early 20th-century art (notably Impressionist art) includes Jean-Baptiste Carpeaux's* Four Quarters of the World *(1867–72).*

◁ **Rooftop view of Sacré-Coeur and the Butte Montmartre**


ILE DE FRANCE
Pages 170–81
Versailles
Fontainebleau
0 kilometers 25
0 miles 25


TUILERIES AND OPERA
Pages 94–103
ILE DE LA CITE, MARAIS, AND BEAUBOURG
Pages 80–93
The Louvre
Pompidou Center
Notre-Dame
THE LEFT BANK
Pages 116–27
Musée de Cluny
0 kilometers 1
0 miles 0.5

The Pompidou Center *(1977) is as famous for its novel inside-out design as it is for masterpieces by Picasso, Matisse, and Miró* (see pp92–3).

Notre-Dame, *a stunning example of Gothic architecture begun in 1163, took two centuries and armies of medieval workers to complete* (see pp86–7). *Architect Viollet-le-Duc designed the spire in the 19th century.*

Sculpture on the Pont Alexandre III

A RIVER VIEW OF PARIS

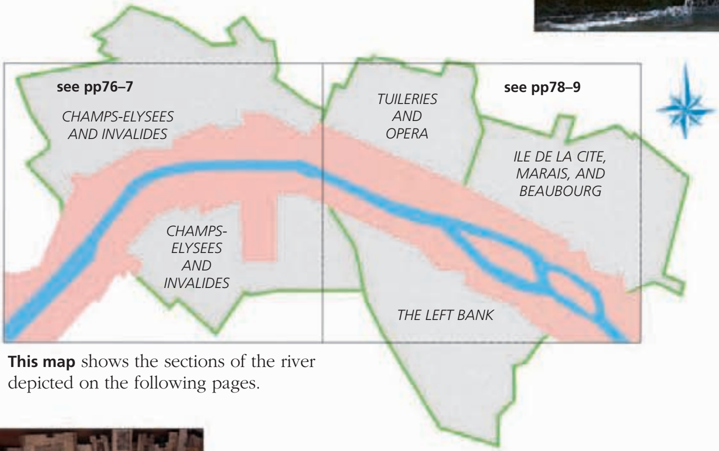
The remarkable French music-hall star Mistinguett described the Seine as a "pretty blonde with laughing eyes." The river most certainly has a beguiling quality, but the relationship that exists between it and the city of Paris is far more than one of flirtation.

No other European city defines itself by its river in the same way as Paris. The Seine is the essential point of reference to the city: distances are measured from it, street numbers determined by it, and it divides the capital into two distinct areas, the Right Bank on the north side of the river and the Left Bank on the south side. These are as well-defined as any of the official boundaries. The city is also divided historically: the east is linked to the city's ancient roots and the west to the 19th–20th centuries.

Practically every building of note in Paris is either along the river bank or within a stone's throw of it. The quays are lined by fine bourgeois apartments, magnificent townhouses, world-renowned museums, and striking monuments.

Above all, the river is very much alive. For centuries fleets of small boats used it, but motorized land traffic stifled this once-bustling scene. Today, the river is busy with commercial barges and massive *bâteaux mouches* pleasure boats carrying sightseers up and down the river.

The Latin Quarter Quayside is on the Left Bank of the Seine. Associated with institutes of learning since the Middle Ages, it acquired its name from the early Latin-speaking students.



see pp76–7
CHAMPS-ELYSEES AND INVALIDES
TUILERIES AND OPERA
see pp78–9
ILE DE LA CITE, MARAIS, AND BEAUBOURG
CHAMPS-ELYSEES AND INVALIDES
THE LEFT BANK

This map shows the sections of the river depicted on the following pages.

0 kilometers 2

0 miles 1

KEY

🟥 Illustrated area

Les Bouquinistes, the bookstalls on the river banks, are treasure troves of second-hand books and prints, and perfect for an afternoon's browsing.

◁ **Point Alexandre III, encrusted with exuberant statuary**

From Pont de Grenelle to Pont de la Concorde

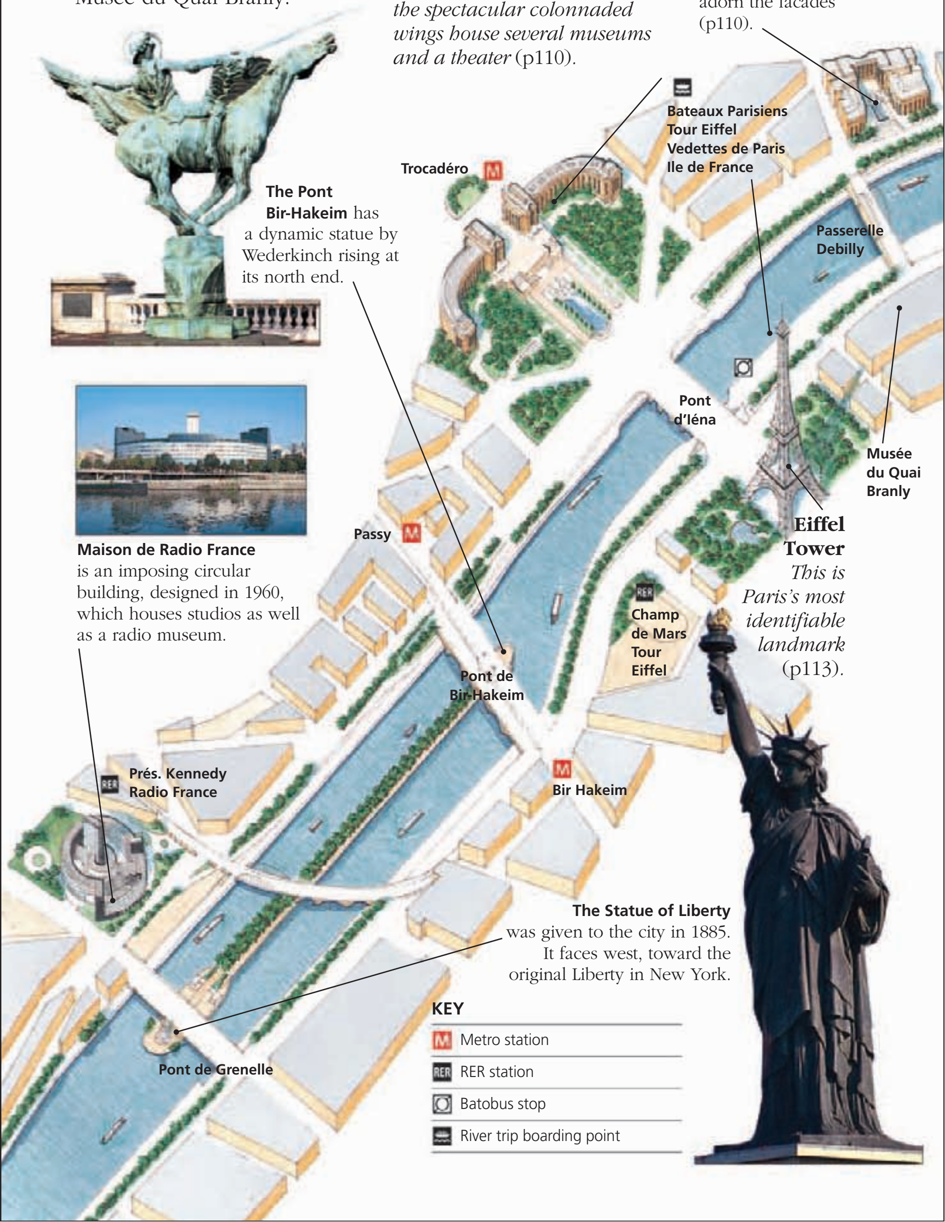
The grand monuments along this stretch of the river are remnants of the Napoleonic era and the Industrial Revolution. The elegance of the Eiffel Tower, the Petit Palais, and the Grand Palais is matched by more recent buildings, such as the Palais de Chaillot and the Musée du Quai Branly.

Palais de Chaillot
Built for the 1937 Exhibition, the spectacular colonnaded wings house several museums and a theater (p110).

The Palais de Tokyo
Bourdelle's statues adorn the facades (p110).

The Pont Bir-Hakeim has a dynamic statue by Wederkinch rising at its north end.

Maison de Radio France is an imposing circular building, designed in 1960, which houses studios as well as a radio museum.



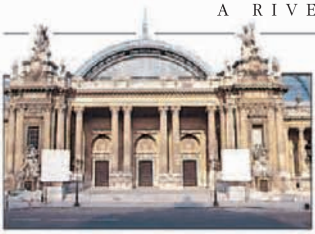
Bateaux Parisiens
Tour Eiffel
Vedettes de Paris
Ile de France
Trocadéro
Passerelle Debilly
Pont d'Iéna
Musée du Quai Branly
Passy
RER Champ de Mars Tour Eiffel
Pont de Bir-Hakeim
Bir Hakeim
RER Prés. Kennedy Radio France
Pont de Grenelle

Eiffel Tower
This is Paris's most identifiable landmark (p113).

The Statue of Liberty was given to the city in 1885. It faces west, toward the original Liberty in New York.

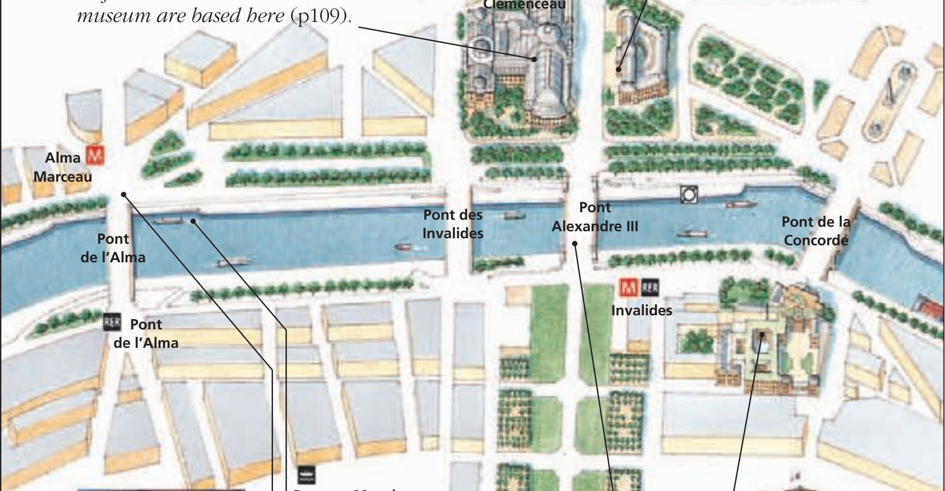
KEY

- M Metro station
- RER RER station
- ○ Batobus stop
- ⛴ River trip boarding point



Grand Palais
Major exhibitions and a science museum are based here (p109).

Petit Palais
Now the Paris museum of fine arts, this was first designed as a companion to the Grand Palais (p108).


Champs-Elysées Clemenceau
Alma Marceau
Pont de l'Alma
Pont de l'Alma
Pont des Invalides
Pont Alexandre III
Pont de la Concorde
Invalides
Bateaux Mouches

The Zouave, a statue on the central pier, is a useful gauge for checking flood levels.

The Liberty Flame is a memorial to the fighters of the French Resistance during World War II.

The Assemblée Nationale Palais-Bourbon was originally built for Louis XIV's daughter. It has accommodated the lower house of the French Parliament since 1830.

Dôme Church
The majestic gilded dome (p115) *is here seen from Pont Alexandre III. Napoleon's tomb is installed in the crypt.*

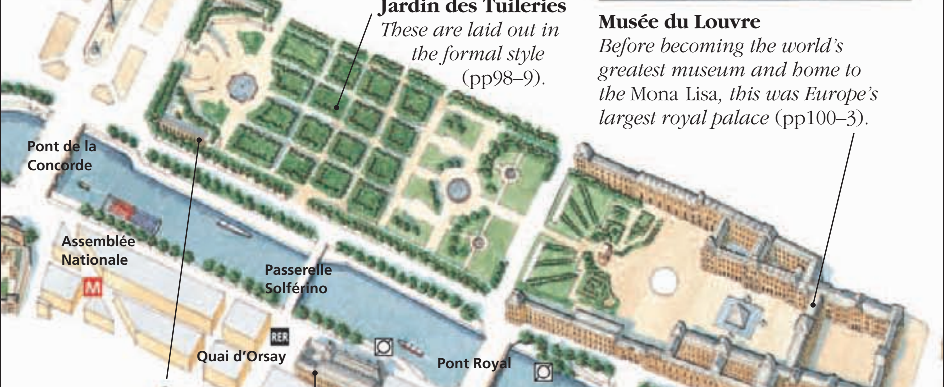
Pont Alexandre III
Flamboyant statuary decorates Paris's most ornate bridge (p109).

From Pont de la Concorde to Pont de Sully

The historic heart of Paris lies on the banks and islands of the east river. At its center is the Ile de la Cité, a natural stepping stone across the Seine and the cultural core of medieval Paris. Today it is still vital to Parisian life.

Jardin des Tuileries *These are laid out in the formal style* (pp98–9).

Musée du Louvre *Before becoming the world's greatest museum and home to the* Mona Lisa, *this was Europe's largest royal palace* (pp100–3).

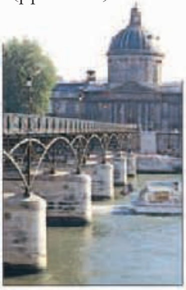


Musée de l'Orangerie *An important collection of 19th-century paintings is on display here* (p98).

Musée d'Orsay *This converted train station houses Paris's outstanding collection of Impressionist art* (pp120–21).

BATOBUS CRUISES

The boarding points are: **Eiffel Tower. Map** 6 D3. M Bir Hakeim. **Champs-Elysées. Map** 7 A1. M Champs-Elysées-Clemenceau. **Musée d'Orsay. Map** 8 D2. M Assemblée Nationale. **Louvre. Map** 8 D2. M Palais Royal-Musée du Louvre. **Hôtel de Ville. Map** 9 B4. M Hôtel de Ville. **Notre-Dame. Map** 9 B4. M St-Michel. **St-Germain-des-Prés. Map** 8 E3. M St-Germain-des-Prés. **Jardin des Plantes. Map** 13 C1. M Jussieu. ***Departures*** *mid-Feb–mid-Mar, mid-Nov–mid-Dec: 10:30am–4:30pm (to 5pm mid-Dec–early Jan); mid-Mar–May, Sep–Nov 11: 10am–7pm (to 9pm Jun–Aug); every 15–30 min daily.* **www.batobus.com**



Passerelle des Arts This steel reconstruction of Paris's first cast-iron bridge (1804) was inaugurated in 1984.

Hôtel des Monnaies, the Mint, was built in 1778, and has an extensive coin and medallion collection in its old milling halls.

HOW TO TAKE A SEINE CRUISE

Bateaux Vedettes Pont Neuf Seine Cruise

The boarding point is: **Square du Vert-Galant** (Pont Neuf). **Map** 8 F3. ***Tel*** *01 46 33 98 38.* M *Pont Neuf.* RER *Châtelet/St-Michel.* 🚌 *27, 58, 67, 70, 72, 74, 75.* ***Departures*** *Mar 15–Oct 31: 10:30am, 11:15am, noon, 1:30–10:30pm (every 30 min) daily; Nov–Mar 14: 10:30am, 11:15am, noon, 2–6:30pm (every 45 min), 8pm, 9pm, 10pm Mon–Thu; 10:30am, 11:15am, noon, 2–6:30pm, 8pm, 9–10:30pm (every 30 min) Fri–Sun.* ***Duration*** *1 hr. Snacks available.* **www.**vedettesdupontneuf.fr

Bateaux Mouches Seine Cruise

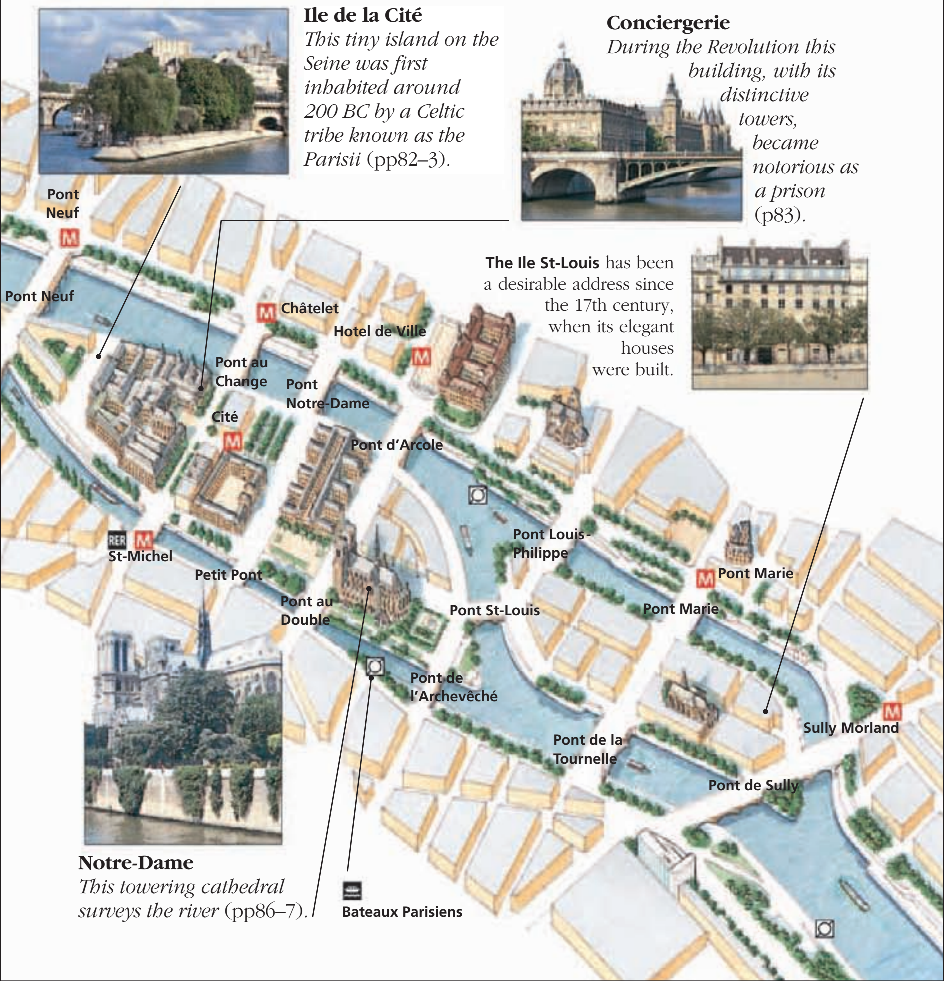
The boarding point is: **Pont de l'Alma. Map** 6 F1. ***Tel*** *01 42 25 96 10.* M *Alma-Marceau.* RER *Pont de l'Alma.* 🚌 *28, 42, 63, 72, 80, 81, 92.* ***Departures*** *Apr–Sep: 10:15am–11pm daily (every 30 min); Oct–Mar: 10:15am–9pm (every 45 min).* ***Duration*** *1hr 15 min.* ***Lunch cruise*** *1pm Sat, Sun, public hols (boarding 12:15pm).* ***Dinner cruise*** *boarding 7:30–8:30pm daily.* ***Duration*** *2hr 15 min. Jacket and tie.* **www.**bateaux-mouches.fr

Vedettes de Paris Ile de France Seine Cruise

Main boarding point is: **Pont du Suffren. Map** 6 D3. ***Tel*** *01 44 18 19 50.* M *Trocadéro, Bir Hakeim.* RER *Champ-de-Mars–Tour Eiffel.* 🚌 *22, 30, 32, 42, 44, 63, 69, 72, 82, 87.* ***Departures*** *10am–10pm daily (11am–6pm Oct–Feb, until 9pm Sat) (every 30 min).* ***Duration*** *1hr.* ***Champagne cruise*** *6pm Thu–Sat. Test three champagnes on a one-hour trip.* ***Gourmand cruise*** *daily on boats leaving between 2 & 6pm.* ***Duration*** *1hr.* **www.**vedettesdeparis.com

Bateaux Parisiens Tour Eiffel Seine Cruise

The boarding point is: **Pont d'Iéna** & **Quai de Montbello** (Apr–Nov). **Map** 6 D2. ***Tel*** *08 25 01 01 01.* M *Trocadéro, Bir Hakeim.* RER *Champ-de-Mars–Tour Eiffel.* 🚌 *42, 82.* ***Departures*** *10am–10pm daily (every 30 min Apr–Sep; hourly Oct–May).* ***Lunch cruise*** *12:15pm daily.* ***Duration*** *2hr 15min.* ***Dinner cruise*** *boarding 7–8:15pm daily.* ***Duration*** *3hr. Jacket and tie.* Bateaux Parisiens are luxurious Bateaux Mouches. **www.**bateauxparisiens.com


Pont Neuf
M
Pont Neuf
M Châtelet
Hotel de Ville
M
Pont au Change
Pont Notre-Dame
Cité
M
Pont d'Arcole
RER M
St-Michel
Petit Pont
Pont au Double
Pont Louis-Philippe
Pont St-Louis
M Pont Marie
Pont Marie
Pont de l'Archevêché
Pont de la Tournelle
M
Sully Morland
Pont de Sully
Bateaux Parisiens

Ile de la Cité
This tiny island on the Seine was first inhabited around 200 BC by a Celtic tribe known as the Parisii (pp82–3).

Conciergerie
During the Revolution this building, with its distinctive towers, became notorious as a prison (p83).

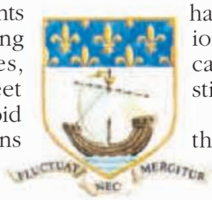
The Ile St-Louis has been a desirable address since the 17th century, when its elegant houses were built.

Notre-Dame
This towering cathedral surveys the river (pp86–7).

ILE DE LA CITÉ, MARAIS, AND BEAUBOURG

The Right Bank is dominated by the modernistic Forum des Halles and Pompidou Center in the Beaubourg. These are Paris's most thriving public areas, with millions of tourists, shoppers, and students flowing between them. Young people flock to Les Halles, shopping for the latest street fashions, but you should avoid the area at night. Renovations to improve Les Halles are taking place from 2010. All roads from here appear to lead to the Pompidou Center, an avant-garde assembly of pipes, ducts, and cables housing the Musée National d'Art Moderne. The smaller streets around the center are full of art galleries housed in crooked, gabled buildings. The neighboring Marais was abandoned by its royal residents during the 1789 Revolution, and it descended into architectural wasteland before being rescued in the 1960s. It has since become a very fashionable address, though small cafés, bakeries, and artisans still survive in its streets.

Notre-Dame cathedral, the Palais de Justice, and Sainte-Chapelle continue to draw tourists to the Ile de la Cité, despite extensive redevelopment of the island in the last century. At the eastern end a bridge connects with the Ile St-Louis, a former swampy pastureland transformed into a residential area with pretty, tree-lined quays and mansions.


FLUCTUAT
NEC
MERGITUR

The motto of the city of Paris

SIGHTS AT A GLANCE

Islands & Squares
- Ile St-Louis ⑦
- Forum des Halles ⑬
- Place des Vosges ⑲
- Place de la Bastille ㉑

Churches
- Sainte-Chapelle ④
- *Notre-Dame pp86–7* ⑥
- St-Gervais–St-Protais ⑨
- St-Eustache ⑫

Historic Buildings
- Conciergerie ②
- Palais de Justice ③
- Hôtel de Ville ⑩
- Tour St-Jacques ⑪

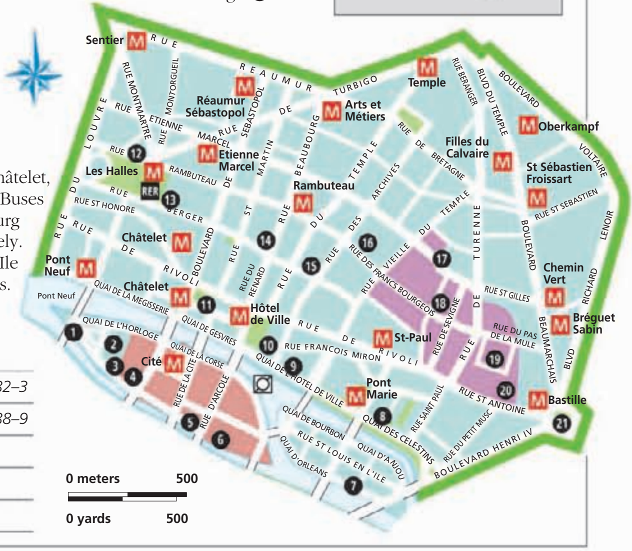
Museums and Galleries
- Crypte Archéologique ⑤
- Hôtel de Sens ⑧
- *Pompidou Center pp92–3* ⑭
- Musée d'Art et d'Histoire du Judaisme ⑮
- Hôtel de Soubise ⑯
- Musée Picasso ⑰
- Musée Carnavalet ⑱
- Maison de Victor Hugo ⑳

Bridges
- Pont Neuf ①

GETTING THERE

Metro stations include Châtelet, Hôtel-de-Ville, and Cité. Buses 47 and 29 serve Beaubourg and the Marais respectively. Several bus routes cross Ile de la Cité and Ile St-Louis.

KEY
- 🟥 Street by Street map *pp82–3*
- 🟪 Street by Street map *pp88–9*
- M Metro station
- ◎ Batobus boarding point
- RER RER station


Sentier
Réaumur Sébastopol
Temple
Arts et Métiers
Oberkampf
Filles du Calvaire
St Sébastien Froissart
Etienne Marcel
Les Halles
RER
Rambuteau
Châtelet
Pont Neuf
Hôtel de Ville
Cité
St-Paul
Pont Marie
Chemin Vert
Bréguet Sabin
Bastille
RUE RÉAUMUR
TURBIGO
RUE MONTMARTRE
MONTORGUEIL
RUE ETIENNE MARCEL
RUE DE RAMBUTEAU
RUE ST HONORE
BERGER
RUE DE RIVOLI
BOULEVARD SEBASTOPOL
ST MARTIN
BEAUBOURG
RUE DU TEMPLE
ARCHIVES
RUE DE BRETAGNE
RUE VIEILLE DU TEMPLE
RUE DES FRANCS BOURGEOIS
RUE DE SEVIGNE
TURENNE
RUE BERANGER
BLVD DU TEMPLE
BOULEVARD VOLTAIRE
RUE ST SEBASTIEN
BOULEVARD RICHARD LENOIR
RUE ST GILLES
RUE DU PAS DE LA MULE
BEAUMARCHAIS
BLVD
RUE ST ANTOINE
RUE FRANCOIS MIRON
RUE DU RENARD
LOUVRE
QUAI DE LA MEGISSERIE
QUAI DE L'HORLOGE
QUAI DE GESVRES
QUAI DE LA CORSE
RUE DE LA CITE
RUE D'ARCOLE
QUAI DE L'HOTEL DE VILLE
QUAI DE BOURBON
RUE ST LOUIS EN L'ILE
QUAI D'ORLEANS
QUAI D'ANJOU
QUAI DES CELESTINS
RUE SAINT PAUL
RUE DU PETIT MUSC
BOULEVARD HENRI IV
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0 meters 500
0 yards 500

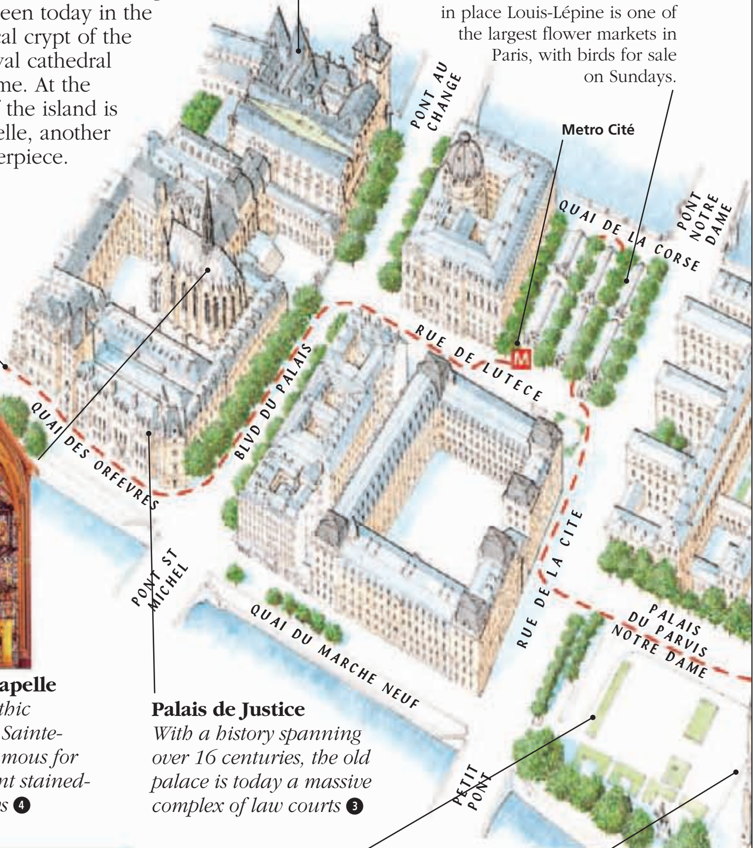
◁ **View of the Conciergerie and the Pont au Change**

Street by Street: Ile de la Cité

The origins of Paris are on the Ile de la Cité, the boat-shaped island on the Seine first inhabited by Celtic tribes in the 3rd century BC. One tribe, the Parisii, eventually gave its name to the city. The island offered a convenient river crossing on the route between northern and southern Gaul and was easily defended. In later centuries the settlement was expanded by the Romans, the Franks, and the Capetian kings to form the nucleus of today's city.

Remains of the first buildings can still be seen today in the archaeological crypt of the great medieval cathedral of Notre-Dame. At the other end of the island is Sainte-Chapelle, another Gothic masterpiece.

★ Conciergerie
This sinister-looking building was the country's chief prison during the Revolution ②


PONT AU CHANGE
QUAI DE LA CORSE
PONT NOTRE DAME
RUE DE LUTECE
M
BLVD DU PALAIS
QUAI DES ORFEVRES
PONT ST MICHEL
QUAI DU MARCHE NEUF
RUE DE LA CITE
PALAIS DU PARVIS NOTRE DAME
PETIT PONT
PONT AU DOUBLE

The Marché aux Fleurs et Oiseaux in place Louis-Lépine is one of the largest flower markets in Paris, with birds for sale on Sundays.

Metro Cité

To Pont Neuf

★ Sainte-Chapelle
A jewel of Gothic architecture, Sainte-Chapelle is famous for its magnificent stained-glass windows ④

Palais de Justice
With a history spanning over 16 centuries, the old palace is today a massive complex of law courts ③

STAR SIGHTS

- ★ Notre-Dame
- ★ Sainte-Chapelle
- ★ Conciergerie

KEY

╌ Suggested route

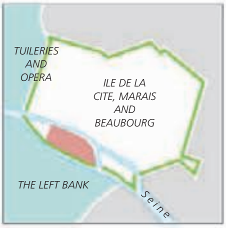
CRYPTE
DU
PARVIS

Point Zéro marks the spot from which all road distances are measured in France.

To Latin Quarter

Crypte Archéologique
Deep under the square lie remnants of houses dating back 2,000 years ⑤

Hôtel Dieu, a large hospital serving central Paris, was founded in AD 651 by St-Landry, Bishop of Paris.

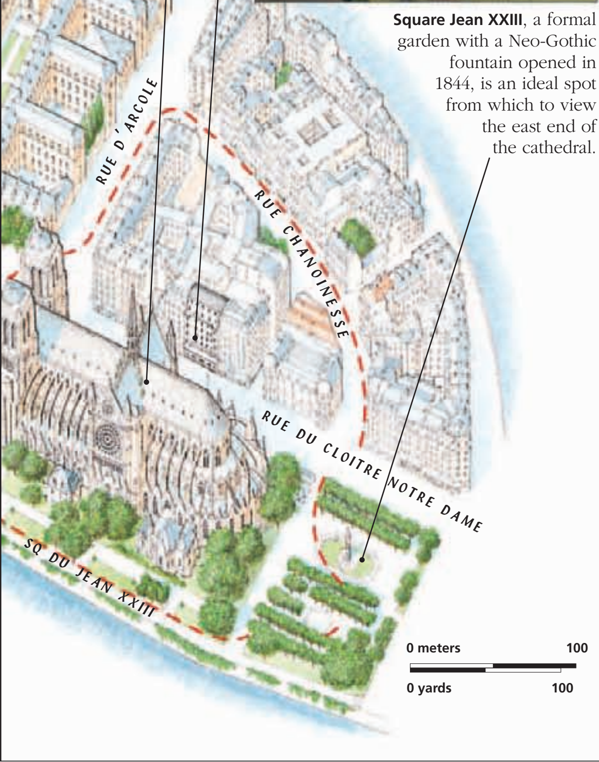


LOCATOR MAP
See Street Finder maps 8, 9

★ Notre-Dame
This cathedral is a superb example of French medieval architecture ⑥

Musée Notre-Dame, founded in 1951, contains exhibits and documents commemorating the great events in Notre-Dame's history.

Square Jean XXIII, a formal garden with a Neo-Gothic fountain opened in 1844, is an ideal spot from which to view the east end of the cathedral.



Pont Neuf, the city's oldest bridge

Pont Neuf ①

75001. **Map** 8 F3. M *Pont Neuf, Cité.*

Despite its name (New Bridge), this bridge is the oldest in Paris and has been immortalized by major literary and artistic figures. The first stone was laid by Henri III in 1578, but it was Henri IV (whose statue stands at the centre) who inaugurated it and gave it its name in 1607.

Conciergerie ②

2 bd du Palais 75001. **Map** 9 A3. ***Tel*** *01 53 40 60 80.* M *Cité.* ○ *9:30am–6pm daily (9am–5pm Nov–Feb; last adm 30 min before closing).* ● *Jan 1, May 1, Dec 25.* 🎟 *Combined ticket with Sainte-Chapelle (see p84) available.* 📷 ♿ *phone to check.* 🛍

Forming part of the huge Palais de Justice, the historic Conciergerie served as a prison from 1391–1914. Henri IV's assassin, François Ravaillac, was imprisoned and tortured here in 1610.

During the Revolution the building was packed with over 4,000 prisoners. Its most celebrated inmate was Marie-Antoinette, who was held in a tiny cell until her execution in 1793. Others included Charlotte Corday, who stabbed Revolutionary leader Marat.

The Conciergerie has a superb four-aisled Gothic hall, where guards of the royal household once lived. Renovated during the 19th century, the building retains its 11th-century torture chamber and 14th-century clock tower.

A sculptured relief on the Palais de Justice

Palais de Justice ❸

4 bd du Palais (entrance by the Cour de Mai) 75001. **Map** 9 A3. ***Tel*** *01 44 32 52 52.* M *Cité.* ○ *9am–6pm Mon–Fri.* ● *public hols & Aug recess.*

This huge block of buildings making up the law courts of Paris stretches the entire width of the Ile de la Cité. It is a splendid sight with its Gothic towers lining the quays. The site has been occupied since Roman times when it was the governors' residence. It was the seat of royal power until Charles V moved the court to the Marais following a bloody revolt in 1358. In April 1793 the notorious Revolutionary Tribunal began dispensing justice from the Première Chambre Civile, or first civil chamber. Today the site embodies Napoleon's great legacy – the French judicial system.

Crypte Archéologique ❺

Parvis Notre-Dame–pl Jean-Paul II 75004. **Map** 9 A4. ***Tel*** *01 55 42 50 10.* M *Cité.* ○ *10am–6pm Tue–Sun (last adm 30 mins before closing).* ● *Jan 1, May 1 & 8, Nov 1 & 11, Dec 25.* 🎟 📷 🛍

Situated beneath the *parvis* (main square) of Notre-Dame and stretching 393 ft (120 m) underground, the crypt was opened in 1980.

There are Gallo-Roman streets and houses with an underground heating system, sections of Lutetia's 3rd-century BC wall, and remains of the cathedral. Models explain the development of Paris from a settlement of the Parisii, the Celtic tribe who inhabited the island 2000 years ago.

Notre-Dame ❻

See pp86–7.

Sainte-Chapelle ❹

6 bd du Palais 75001. **Map** 9 A3. ℹ *01 53 40 60 80.* M *Cité.* ○ *Mar–Oct: 9:30am–6pm daily; Nov–Feb: 9am–5pm daily.* ● *Jan 1, May 1, Dec 25.* 🎟 *Combined ticket with Conciergerie (see p83) available. No sharp objects permitted.* 📷 🎟 🛍

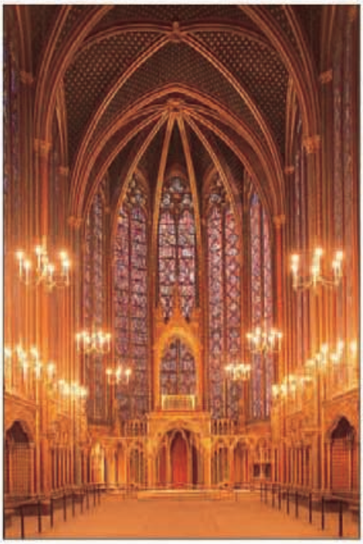
Ethereal and magical, Sainte-Chapelle has been hailed as one of the greatest architectural masterpieces of the Western world. In the Middle Ages the devout likened this church to "a gateway to heaven." Today no visitor can fail to be transported by the blaze of light created by the 15 magnificent stained-glass windows, separated by pencil-like columns soaring 50 ft (15 m) to the star-studded roof. The windows portray more than 1,000 biblical scenes in a kaleidoscope of red, gold, green, and blue. Starting from the left near the entrance and proceeding clockwise, you can trace the scriptures from Genesis through to the Crucifixion and the Apocalypse.

The chapel was completed in 1248 by Louis IX to house what was believed to be Christ's Crown of Thorns and fragments of the True Cross (now in the treasury at Notre-Dame). The king, who was canonized for his good works, purchased the relics from the Emperor of Constantinople, paying three times more for them than for the entire construction of Sainte-Chapelle.

The building actually consists of two separate chapels. The somber lower chapel was used by servants and lower court officials, while the exquisite upper chapel, reached by means of a narrow spiral staircase, was reserved for the royal family and its courtiers. A discreetly placed window enabled the king to take part in the celebrations unobserved.

During the Revolution the building was badly damaged and became a warehouse. It was renovated a century later by architect Viollet-le-Duc.

Today, evening concerts of classical music are held regularly in the chapel, taking advantage of its superb acoustics.



The magnificent interior of Sainte-Chapelle

Ile St-Louis ⑦

75004. **Map** 9 B-C4-5. M *Pont Marie, Sully Morland.* ***St-Louis-en-l'Ile Tel** 01 46 34 11 60.* ○ *9am–noon, 3pm–7pm Tue–Sun.* ● *public hols.* ***Concerts*** **www**.stlouisenlile.com

Across Pont St-Louis from Ile de la Cîté, smaller Ile St-Louis is a little haven of quiet streets and riverside quays. There are luxurious restaurants and stores, including the famous ice-cream maker Berthillon. Almost everything on the Ile was built in classical style in the 17th century. The church of **St-Louis-en-l'Ile**, with its marble and gilt Baroque interior, was completed in 1726 from plans by royal architect Louis de Vau. Note the 1741 iron clock at the church entrance, the pierced iron spire, and a plaque given in 1926 by St. Louis, Missouri. The church is also twinned with Carthage cathedral in Tunisia, where St-Louis is buried.

The interior of St-Louis-en-l'Ile

Hôtel de Sens ⑧

1 rue du Figuier 75004. **Map** 9 C4. ***Tel** 01 42 78 14 60.* M *Pont-Marie.* ○ *10am–7:30pm Wed & Thu (from 1pm Tue, Fri, Sat).* ● *public hols.*

One of only a handful of medieval buildings still standing in Paris, the Hôtel de Sens is home to the Forney arts library. During the period of the Catholic League in the 16th century, it was turned into a fortified mansion and occupied by the Bourbons, the Guises, and Cardinal de Pellevé.

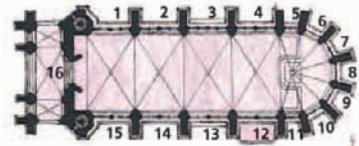
St-Gervais–St-Protais ⑨

Pl St-Gervais 75004. **Map** 9 B3. ***Tel** 01 48 87 32 02.* M *Hôtel de Ville.* ○ *5:30am –10pm daily.* ***Organ concerts***

Named after Gervase and Protase, two Roman soldiers martyred by the Emperor Nero, the origins of this magnificent church go back to the 6th century. It boasts the earliest Classical façade in Paris, dating from 1621, with a triple-tiered arrangement of Doric, Ionic and Corinthian columns.

Behind the façade lies a late Gothic church renowned for its association with religious music. François Couperin (1668–1733) composed his two masses for this church's organ.

UPPER CHAPEL WINDOWS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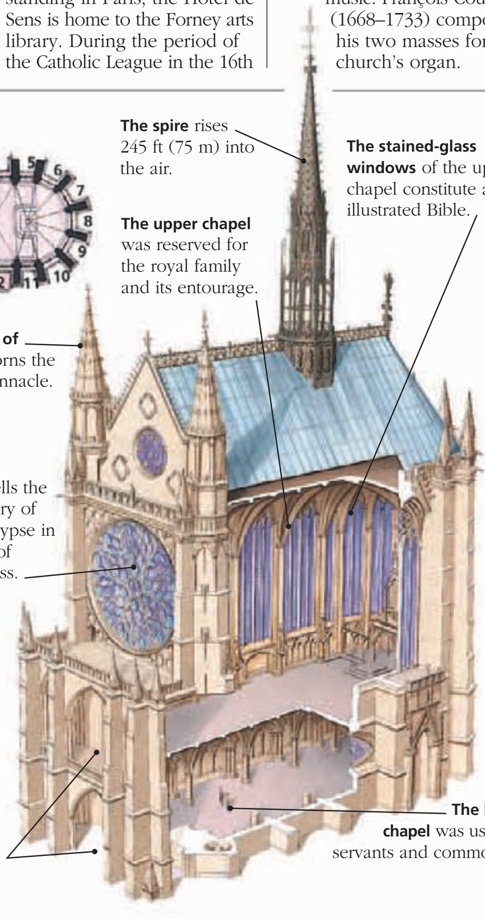
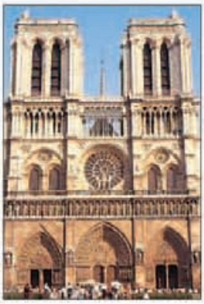
1 Genesis
2 Exodus
3 Numbers
4 Deuteronomy: Joshua
5 Judges
6 *left* Isaiah *right* Rod of Jesse
7 *left* St. John the Evangelist *right* Childhood of Christ
8 Christ's Passion
9 *left* St. John the Baptist *right* Story of Daniel
10 Ezekiel
11 *left* Jeremiah *right* Tobias
12 Judith and Job
13 Esther
14 Book of Kings
15 Story of the Relics
16 Rose Window: The Apocalypse

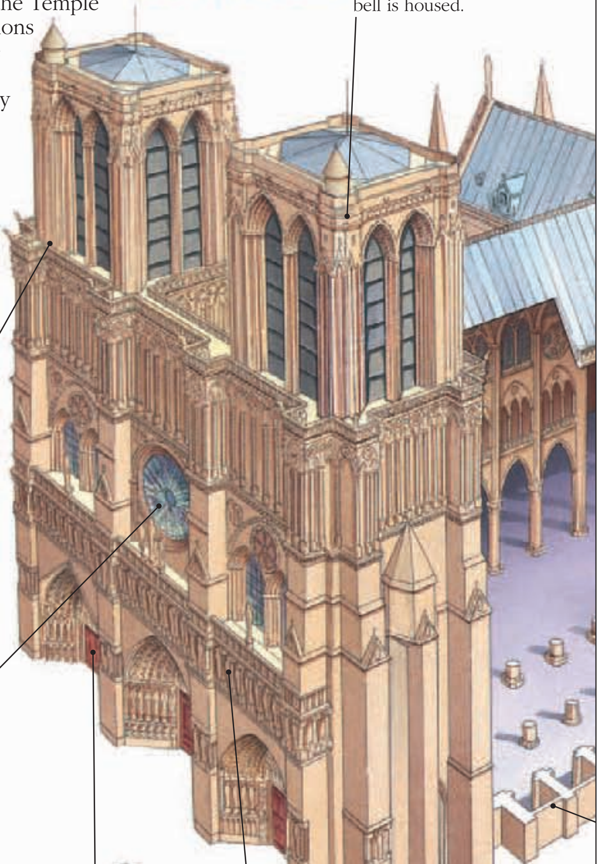

The spire rises 245 ft (75 m) into the air.
The stained-glass windows of the upper chapel constitute a vast illustrated Bible.
The upper chapel was reserved for the royal family and its entourage.
The Crown of Thorns adorns the chapel's pinnacle.
The Rose Window tells the biblical story of the Apocalypse in 86 panels of stained glass.
The lower chapel was used by servants and commoners.
Main portals

Notre-Dame ⑥

No other building epitomizes the history of Paris more than Notre-Dame. Built on the site of a Roman temple, the cathedral was commissioned by Bishop de Sully in 1159. The first stone was laid in 1163, marking the start of two centuries of toil by armies of Gothic architects and medieval craftsmen. It has been witness to great events of French history ever since, including the coronations of Henry VI in 1422 and Napoleon Bonaparte in 1804. During the Revolution the building was desecrated and rechristened the Temple of Reason. Extensive renovations (including the addition of the spire and gargoyles) were carried out in the 19th century by architect Viollet-le-Duc.



★ West Façade
The beautifully proportioned west façade is a masterpiece of French Gothic architecture.



387 steps lead to the top of the south tower, where the famous Emmanuel bell is housed.

★ Galerie des Chimères
The cathedral's legendary gargoyles (chimères) *gaze menacingly from the cathedral's ledge.*

★ West Rose Window
This window depicts the Virgin in a medallion of rich reds and blues.

STAR FEATURES

- ★ West Façade and Portals
- ★ Flying Buttress
- ★ Rose Windows
- ★ Galerie des Chimères

The Kings' Gallery features 28 stone images of the kings of Judah.

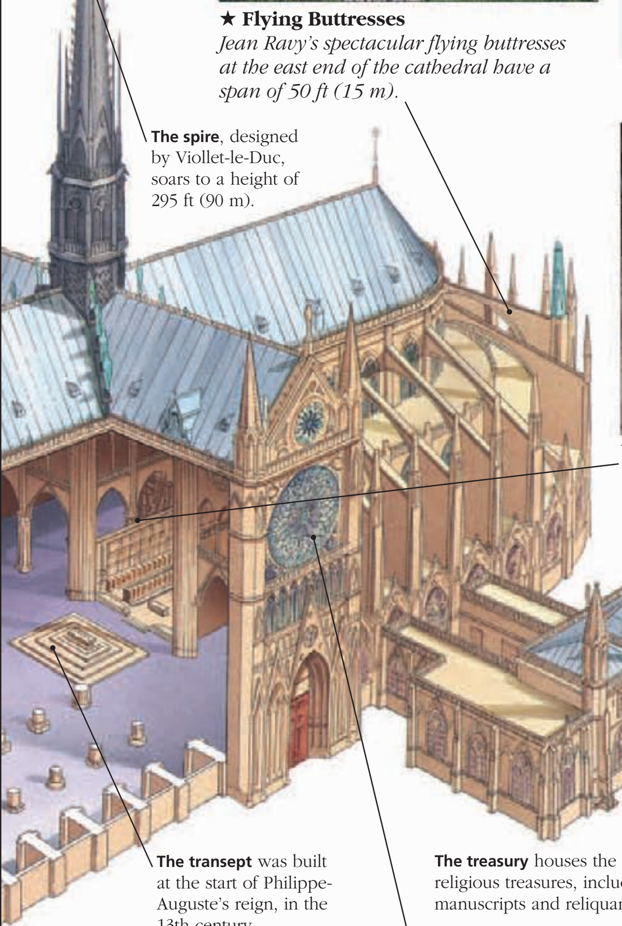
Portal of the Virgin
The Virgin surrounded by saints and kings is a fine composition of 13th-century statues.

★ Flying Buttresses
Jean Ravy's spectacular flying buttresses at the east end of the cathedral have a span of 50 ft (15 m).

VISITORS' CHECKLIST

Parvis-Notre-Dame–pl Jean-Paul II. **Map** 9 B4. ℹ *01 42 34 56 10.* M *Cité.* 🚌 *21, 27, 38, 47, 85, 96.* ⚓ *Notre-Dame.* P *pl du Parvis.* ○ *8am–6:45pm (to 7:15pm Sat, Sun);* ***towers*** *10am– 5:30pm (winter); 10am–6:30pm (summer).* ✝ *8am, 9am, noon, 6:15pm Mon–Fri; 6:30pm Sat; 8:30am, 10am, 11:30am, 12:45pm, 6:30pm Sun.* ▨ *for towers.* ✋ ▭

The spire, designed by Viollet-le-Duc, soars to a height of 295 ft (90 m).

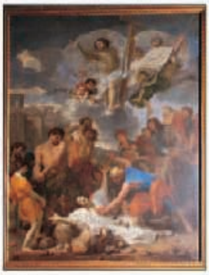


View of Interior
The view from the main entrance takes in the high-vaulted central nave, choir, and high altar.

The transept was built at the start of Philippe-Auguste's reign, in the 13th century.

The treasury houses the cathedral's religious treasures, including ancient manuscripts and reliquaries.

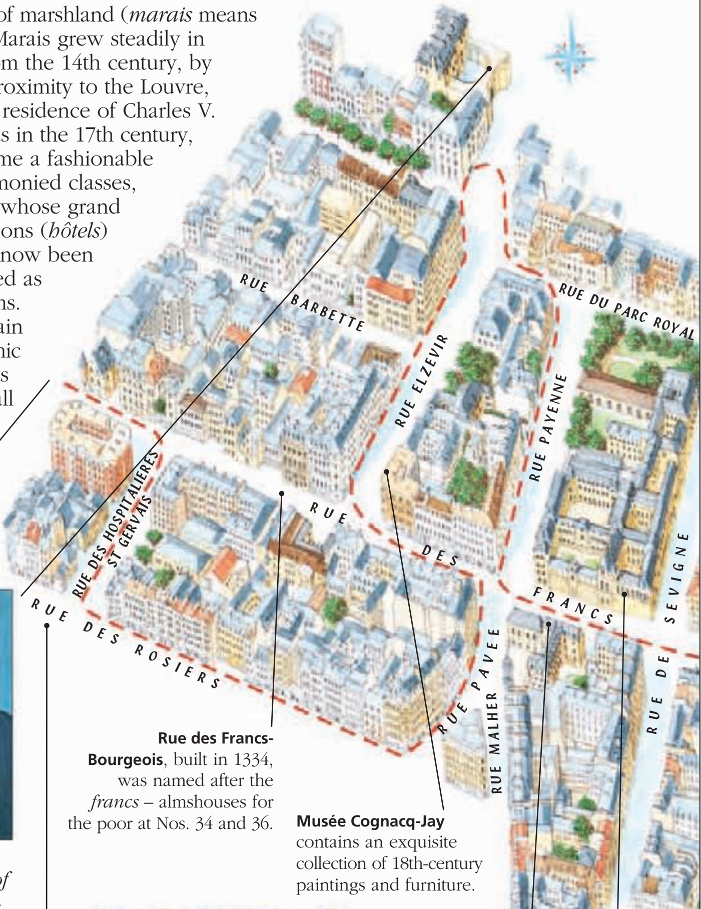
★ South Rose Window
This south facade window, with its central depiction of Christ, is an impressive 43 ft (13 m) high.



The "Mays" Paintings
These religious paintings, by Charles Le Brun and Le Sueur among others, were presented by the Paris guilds every May 1 from 1630 to 1707.

Street by Street: The Marais

Once an area of marshland (*marais* means swamp), the Marais grew steadily in importance from the 14th century, by virtue of its proximity to the Louvre, the preferred residence of Charles V. Its heyday was in the 17th century, when it became a fashionable area for the monied classes, many of whose grand mansions (*hôtels*) have now been restored as museums. Once again fashionable, chic designer boutiques alternate with small restaurants and stores.


RUE BARBETTE
RUE DU PARC ROYAL
RUE ELZEVIR
RUE PAYENNE
RUE DES HOSPITALIERES ST GERVAIS
RUE DES FRANCS
RUE DE SEVIGNE
RUE DES ROSIERS
RUE PAVEE
RUE MALHER

To the Pompidou Centre

★ Musée Picasso
The palatial home of a 17th-century salt-tax collector houses the most extensive collection of Picassos in the world. Closed until 2010/2011 ⓱

Rue des Francs-Bourgeois, built in 1334, was named after the *francs* – almshouses for the poor at Nos. 34 and 36.

Musée Cognacq-Jay contains an exquisite collection of 18th-century paintings and furniture.

Hôtel de Lamoignon was built in 1584 and houses Paris's historical library.

Rue des Rosiers, heart of the city's oldest Jewish quarter, is lined with 18th-century houses, stores, and restaurants serving hot pastrami and borscht.

★ Musée Carnavalet
Occupying two large mansions, this museum covers the history of Paris from Prehistoric and Gallo-Roman times ⓲

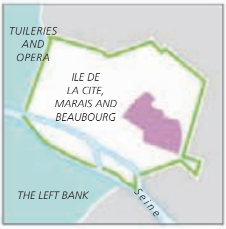
KEY

▬ ▬ ▬ Suggested route

0 meters 100

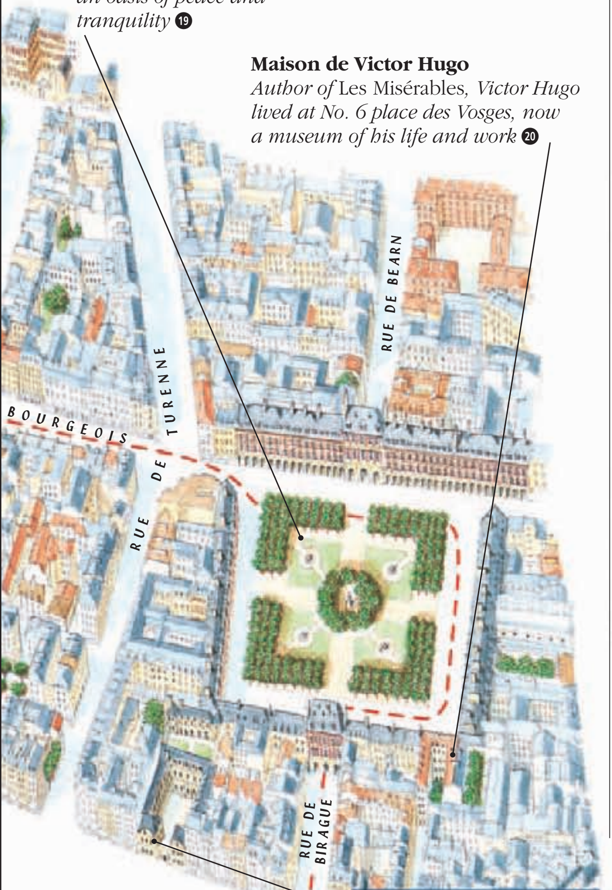
0 yards 100

★ Place des Vosges
This enchanting square is an oasis of peace and tranquility ⑲



LOCATOR MAP
See Street Finder maps 9, 10

Maison de Victor Hugo
Author of Les Misérables, *Victor Hugo lived at No. 6 place des Vosges, now a museum of his life and work* ⑳



To Metro Sully Morland

STAR SIGHTS

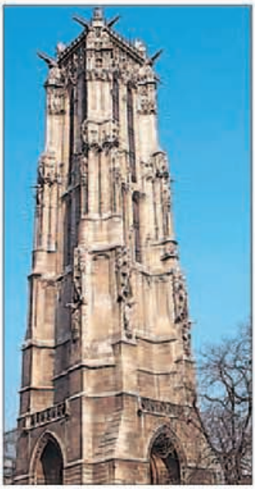
- ★ Musée Picasso
- ★ Musée Carnavalet
- ★ Place des Vosges

Hôtel de Sully, with its orangerie and courtyard, is an elegant Renaissance mansion.

Hôtel de Ville ⑩

Pl de l'Hôtel de Ville 75004.
Map 9 B3. ***Tel*** *01 42 76 40 40.*
M *Hôtel-de-Ville.* ○ *to groups: phone to arrange (01 42 76 54 04).* ● *public hols, and for official functions (phone to check).* ♿

Home of the city council, the Hôtel de Ville is a 19th-century reconstruction of the 17th-century town hall burned down by insurgents of the Paris Commune in 1871. It is a highly ornate example of Third Republic architecture, with elaborate stonework, turrets, and statues overlooking a pedestrianized square.



The 16th-century Tour St-Jacques

Tour St-Jacques ⑪

Square de la Tour St-Jacques 75004.
Map 9 A3. M *Châtelet.* ● *closed for renovations.*

This imposing late Gothic tower, dating from 1523, is all that remains of a medieval church used as a rendezvous by pilgrims setting out for Compostela in Spain. The building was destroyed by revolutionaries in 1797.

Earlier, Blaise Pascal, the 17th-century philosopher, mathematician, physicist, and writer, used the tower for barometric experiments. His statue stands at the base of the tower, which is now used as a meteorological station.

St-Eustache ⑫

Pl du Jour 75001. **Map** 9 A1. ***Tel*** *01 42 36 31 05.* **M** *Les Halles.* **RER** *Châtelet-Les-Halles.* ○ *9:30am–7pm Mon–Fri, 10am–7pm Sat, 9am–7pm Sun.* ✝ *12:30pm Mon–Fri, 6pm Mon–Sat, 9:30am, 11am, 6pm Sun.* ***Concerts*** **www**.saint-eustache.org

With its Gothic plan and Renaissance decoration, St-Eustache is one of Paris's most beautiful churches. Its massive interior is modeled on Notre-Dame, with five naves and side and radial chapels. The 105 years (1532–1637) it took to complete the church saw the flowering of the Renaissance style, which is evident in the magnificent arches, pillars, and columns.

St-Eustache has hosted many ceremonial events including the baptisms of Cardinal Richelieu and Madame de Pompadour, and the funerals of fabulist La Fontaine, Colbert (prime minister of Louis XIV), 17th-century dramatist Molière and the revolutionary orator Mirabeau. It was here that Berlioz first performed his *Te Deum* in 1855. Today talented choir groups perform regularly and organ recitals are held on Sundays at 5:30pm.

Forum des Halles ⑬

75001. **Map** 13 A2. **M** *Les Halles.* **RER** *Châtelet-Les-Halles.* ***Le Forum des Images****: 2 rue du Cinéma.* ○ *12:30–11:30pm Tue–Fri, 2–11:30pm Sat, Sun.*

Known simply as Les Halles and built amid much controversy on the site of the famous old fruit and vegetable market, the complex occupies 750,000 sq ft (7 ha), partly above and partly below ground, and has a reputation for being unsafe, particularly at night. The underground levels 2 and 3 are occupied by a varied array of stores, from clothes boutiques to megastores, as well as two multiscreen movie theaters and a cinema resource center, **Le Forum des Images**. Above ground there are well-tended gardens, pergolas and mini-pavillions. Extensive renovations to improve the area were due to start in 2006 but work is slow to commence.

St-Eustache and sculptured head, *l'Ecoute*, by Henri de Miller

Pompidou Center ⑭

See pp92–3.

Musée d'Art et d'Histoire du Judaïsme ⑮

Hôtel de St-Aignan, 71 rue du Temple 75003. **Map** 13 B2. ***Tel*** *01 53 01 86 60.* **M** *Rambuteau.* ○ *11am–6pm Mon–Fri, 10am–6pm Sun.* ● *Jewish hols.* 🎧 ♿ ☕ 🛍 **www**.mahj.org

This museum in a Marais mansion, the elegant Hôtel de St-Aignan, brings together collections formerly scattered around the city, and commemorates the culture of French Jewry from medieval times to the present. Visitors learn that there has been a sizeable Jewish community in France since Roman times, and some of the world's greatest Jewish scholars – Rashi, Rabenu Tam, the Tosafists – were French. Much exquisite craftsmanship is displayed, with elaborate silverware, Torah covers, fabrics, and items of fine Judaica and religious objects for use both in the synagogue and in the home. There are also photographs, paintings, and cartoons and historical documents, including some on the antisemitic Dreyfus Affair more than a century ago.

Hôtel de Soubise ⑯

60 rue des Francs-Bourgeois 75003. **Map** 9 C2. **M** *Rambuteau.* ● *to the public.*

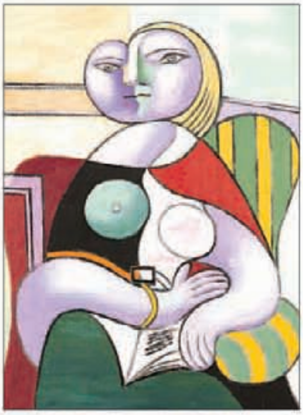
This imposing mansion, built from 1705 to 1709 for the Princesse de Rohan, is one of two main buildings housing the national archives (the other one being the Hôtel de Rohan). It boasts a majestic courtyard and 18th-century interior decoration by some of the best-known artists of the time.

Notable items held here include Natoire's *rocaille* work in the Princess's bedchamber and Napoleon's will, in which he asks for his remains to be returned to France. Unfortunately the interior is only accessible by appointment to historical researchers.

Musée Picasso ⑰

Hôtel Salé, 5 rue de Thorigny, 75003. **Map** 10 D2. ☎ *01 42 71 25 21.* **M** *St-Sébastien Froissart.* ● *Closed for renovation work until 2012.* 🎧 📷 ♿ 🗣 *groups by appointment only.* 🛍 ☕ **www**.musee-picasso.fr

On the death of the Spanish-born artist Pablo Picasso (1881–1973), who lived most of his life in France, the French State inherited one quarter of his works in lieu of death duties. In 1986, it used them to create the Musée Picasso in the beautifully



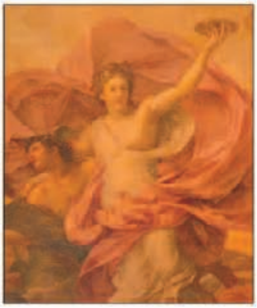
***Woman Reading* (1932) by Pablo Picasso**

restored Hôtel Salé, one of the loveliest buildings in the Marais. It was built in 1656 for Aubert de Fontenay, collector of the dreaded salt tax (*salé* means "salty").

Comprising over 200 paintings, 158 sculptures, 88 ceramic works, and some 3,000 sketches and engravings, this unique collection shows the enormous range and variety of Picasso's work, including examples from his Blue, Pink, and Cubist periods.

Highlights to look out for are his Blue period *Self-portrait*, painted at age 20; *Still Life with Caned Chair*, which introduced collage to Cubism; the Neoclassical *Pipes of Pan;* and *The Crucifixion*.

The museum frequently loans canvases for special exhibitions elsewhere, so some pieces will be on show in other galleries. The museum closed in August 2009 for major renovation work, which should be finished by 2012.



A magnificent 17th-century ceiling painting by Charles Le Brun

Musée Carnavalet ⑱

23 rue de Sevigné 75003. **Map** *10 D3.*
Tel *01 44 59 58 58.* M *St-Paul.*
○ *10am–6pm Tue–Sun (rooms open in rotas: phone to check).* ● *public hols.* 📷 ♿ *ring for times.* 🛍
www.carnavalet.paris.fr

Devoted to the history of Paris since Prehistoric times, this vast museum is in two adjoining mansions. They include entire decorated rooms with gilded paneling, furniture, and *objets d'art*; many works of art, such as paintings and sculptures of prominent personalities; and engravings showing Paris being built.

The main building is the Hôtel Carnavalet, built as a town house in 1548 by Nicolas Dupuis. The literary hostess Madame de Sévigné lived here between 1677 and 1696, entertaining the intelligentsia of the day and writing her celebrated *Lettres*. Many of her possessions are in the first-floor exhibit covering the Louis XIV era.

The 17th-century Hôtel le Peletier, opened in 1989, features reconstructions of early 20th-century interiors and artifacts from the Revolution and Napoleonic era. The Orangery houses a new department devoted to Prehistory and Gallo-Roman Paris. The collection includes pirogues discovered in 1992, during an archaeological dig in the Parc de Bercy, which unearthed a neolithic village.

Place des Vosges ⑲

75003, 75004. **Map** *10 D3.*
M *Bastille, St-Paul.*

This perfectly symmetrical square, laid out in 1605 by Henri IV, is considered among the most beautiful in the world. Thirty-six houses, nine on each side, are built over arcades which today accommodate antiques stores and fashionable cafés. The square has been the scene of many historical events over the centuries, including a three-day tournament in celebration of the marriage of Louis XIII to Anne of Austria in 1615.

Maison de Victor Hugo ⑳

6 pl des Vosges 75004. **Map** *10 D4.*
Tel *01 42 72 10 16.* M *Bastille.*
○ *10am–6pm Tue–Sun.*
● *public hols.* ♿ ***Library***
www.musee-hugo.paris.fr

The French poet, dramatist and novelist lived on the second floor of the former Hôtel Rohan-Guéménée, the largest house on the square, from 1832 to 1848. It was here that he wrote most of *Les Misérables*. On display are reconstructions of some of the rooms in which he lived, complete with his desk, the furniture he made, his pen-and-ink drawings, and mementos from the important periods of his life, from his childhood to his exile between 1852 and 1870. There are also regular temporary exhibitions.

Marble bust of Victor Hugo by Auguste Rodin

Place de la Bastille ㉑

75004. **Map** *10 E4.* M *Bastille.*

Nothing remains of the infamous prison stormed by the revolutionary mob on July 14, 1789, the event that sparked the French Revolution.

The 170-ft (52-m) Colonne de Juillet stands in the middle of the traffic-clogged square to honor the victims of the July Revolution of 1830. On the south side of the square (at 120 rue de Lyon) is the 2,700-seat **Opéra National Bastille**, completed in 1989, the bicentennial of the French Revolution.

The "genius of liberty" statue on top of the Colonne de Juillet

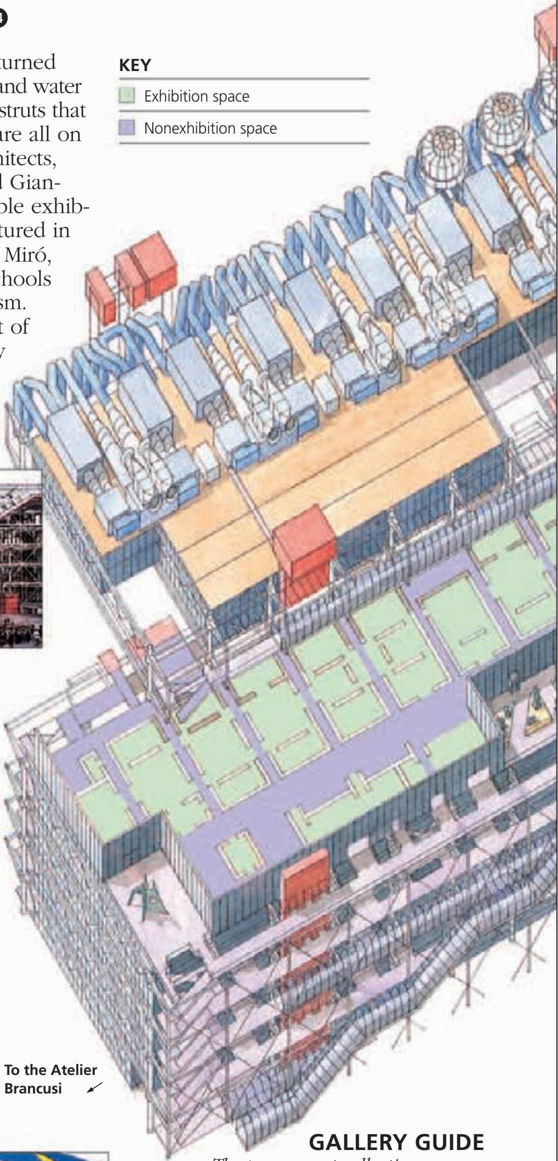
Pompidou Center ⓮

The Pompidou is like a building turned inside out: escalators, elevators, air and water ducts, and even the massive steel struts that make up the building's skeleton are all on the outside. This allowed the architects, Richard Rogers, Renzo Piano, and Gianfranco Franchini, to create a flexible exhibition space. Among the artists featured in the museum are Matisse, Picasso, Miró, and Pollock, representing such schools as Fauvism, Cubism, and Surrealism. The Pompidou also keeps abreast of the Paris art scene with frequently changing temporary exhibitions. Outside in the Piazza, crowds gather to watch street performers.

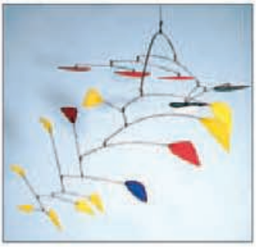
KEY

🟩 Exhibition space

🟪 Nonexhibition space



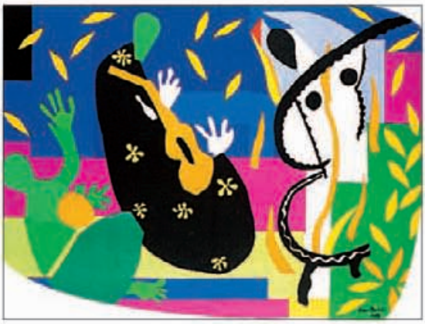
This riotous jumble of glass and steel, known as Beaubourg, is Paris's top tourist attraction, built in 1977 and drawing over seven million visitors a year.



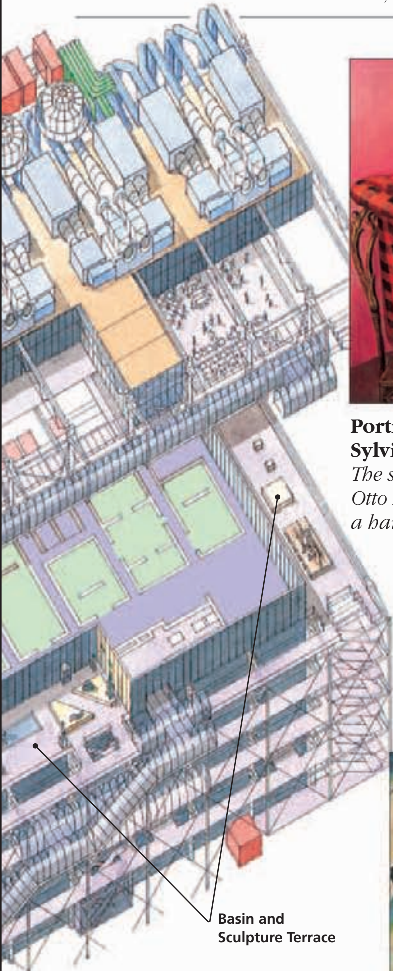
Mobile on Two Planes *(1955)*
20th-century American artist Alexander Calder introduced the mobile as an art form.

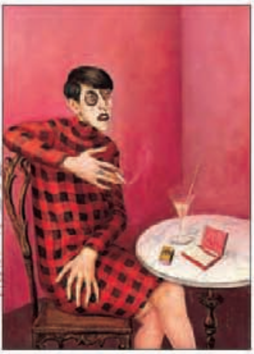
GALLERY GUIDE

The permanent collections are on the fifth and fourth levels: works from 1905–60 are on the former, contemporary art on the latter. The first and sixth levels are for temporary exhibitions; the first, second and third house a library. The lower levels make up "The Forum," the focal public area, with a performance center, movie theater, and children's workshop.



Sorrow of the King *(1952)*
This collage was created by Matisse using gouache-painted paper cutouts.

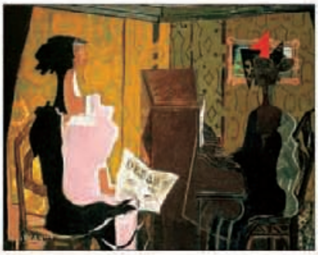




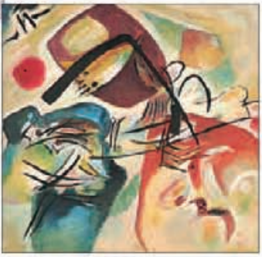
Portrait of the Journalist Sylvia von Harden *(1926)*
The surgical precision of Otto Dix's style makes this a harsh caricature.

VISITORS' CHECKLIST

Centre d'Art et de Culture Georges Pompidou, pl G Pompidou, 75004. **Map** 9 B2. ***Tel*** *01 44 78 12 33.* M *Rambuteau, Châtelet, Hôtel de Ville.* 🚌 *21, 29, 38, 47, 58, 69, 70, 72, 74, 75, 76, 81, 85, 96.* RER *Châtelet-Les-Halles.* P *Centre G Pompidou.* ○ *MNAM & temp exhibs: 11am–10pm Wed–Mon; Atelier Brancusi: 2– 6pm Wed–Mon; Library: noon–10pm Mon, Wed–Fri, 11am–10pm w/e.*
www.cnac-gp.fr



Le Duo *(1937)*
Georges Braque, like Picasso, developed the Cubist technique of representing different views of a subject in a single picture.



With the Black Arc *(1912) The transition to Abstraction, one of the major art forms of the 20th century, can be seen in the works of Wassily Kandinsky.*

Stravinsky Fountain
This fountain, which was inaugurated in 1983, is in the place Igor Stravinsky near the Pompidou Center. It was designed by sculptors Jean Tinguely and Niki de Saint Phalle, both of whom are represented in the Pompidou Center.

BRANCUSI WORKSHOP

The Atelier Brancusi, on the rue Rambuteau side of the piazza, is a reconstruction of the workshop of the Romanian-born artist Constantin Brancusi (1876–1957), who lived and worked in Paris. He bequeathed his entire collection of works to the French state on condition that his workshop be rebuilt as it was. The collection includes over 200 sculptures and plinths, 1600 photographs exhibited in rotation, and tools Brancusi used to create his works.
Also featured are some of his more personal items such as documents, pieces of furniture, and his book collection.

Interior of the Brancusi workshop, designed by Renzo Piano

TUILERIES AND OPÉRA

The 19th-century grandeur of Baron Haussmann's *grands boulevards* offsets the bustle of bankers, theater-goers, sightseers, and shoppers who frequent the area around the Opéra. A profusion of stores and department stores, ranging from the exclusively expensive to the popular, draws the crowds. Much of the area's older character is found in the early 19th-century shopping arcades, with elaborate steel and glass roofs. They are known as *galeries* or *passages*, and were restored to their former glory in the 1970s. Galerie Vivienne, which is the fanciest, has an elaborate, patterned mosaic floor. The passage des Panoramas, passage Verdeau, and the tiny passage des Princes are more old-style Parisian. These streets abound with curious stores of all kinds, from mouthwatering food stores to antiquarian bookstores to stamp collectors.

The Tuileries area lies between the Opéra and the river, bounded by the vast place de la Concorde in the west and the Louvre to the east. The Louvre palace combines one of the world's greatest art collections with IM Pei's avant-garde glass pyramid. Elegant squares and formal gardens give the area its special character. Monuments to monarchy and the arts coexist with modern luxury at its most ostentatious. Place Vendôme, home to exquisite jewelry stores and the luxurious Ritz Hotel, is a heady mix of the wealthy and the chic. Parallel to the Jardin des Tuileries are two of Paris's foremost shopping streets, the rue de Rivoli and rue St-Honoré, full of expensive boutiques, bookstores, and deluxe hotels.

Lamppost of vestal virgin outside the Opéra

SIGHTS AT A GLANCE

Museums and Galleries
- Galerie Nationale du Jeu de Paume ⑥
- Musée des Arts Décoratifs ⑪
- Grévin ③
- *Musée du Louvre pp100–3* ⑭
- Musée de l'Orangerie ⑧

Squares, Parks, and Gardens
- Jardin des Tuileries ⑨
- Place de la Concorde ⑦
- Place Vendôme ⑤

Monuments
- Arc de Triomphe du Carrousel ⑫

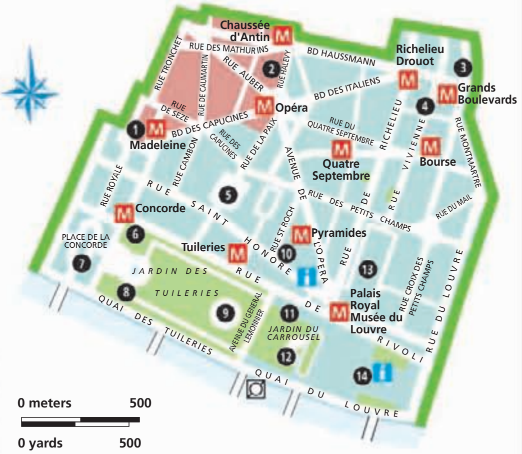
Historic Buildings
- Opéra de Paris Garnier ②
- Palais Royal ⑬

Churches
- La Madeleine ①
- St-Roch ⑩

Stores
- Les Passages ④

GETTING THERE

This area is well served by the metro system, with stations at Tuileries, Pyramides, Palais Royal, Madeleine, and Opéra, among others. Bus route 72 passes along Rue de Rivoli and quai du Louvre, while routes 21, 27, 29, and 81 serve avenue de l'Opéra.


Chaussée d'Antin
RUE DES MATHURINS
RUE TRONCHET
RUE DE CAUMARTIN
RUE AUBER
RUE HALEVY
BD HAUSSMANN
Richelieu Drouot
Grands Boulevards
BD DES ITALIENS
Opéra
RUE DE SEZE
BD DES CAPUCINES
RUE DES CAPUCINES
RUE DE LA PAIX
Madeleine
RUE CAMBON
RUE DU QUATRE SEPTEMBRE
RICHELIEU
VIVIENNE
RUE MONTMARTRE
Quatre Septembre
Bourse
AVENUE DE L'OPERA
RUE ROYALE
RUE SAINT HONORE
RUE DES PETITS CHAMPS
RUE DU MAIL
Concorde
RUE ST ROCH
Pyramides
PLACE DE LA CONCORDE
Tuileries
JARDIN DES TUILERIES
RUE
RUE CROIX DES PETITS CHAMPS
RUE DU LOUVRE
QUAI DES TUILERIES
AVENUE DU GENERAL LEMONNIER
JARDIN DU CARROUSEL
RUE DE RIVOLI
Palais Royal Musée du Louvre
QUAI DU LOUVRE
1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
0 meters 500
0 yards 500

KEY

▨ Street by Street map *pp96–7*

M Metro station

i Tourist information

◁ **View of the place de la Concorde and the Obelisk**

Street-by-Street: Opéra Quarter

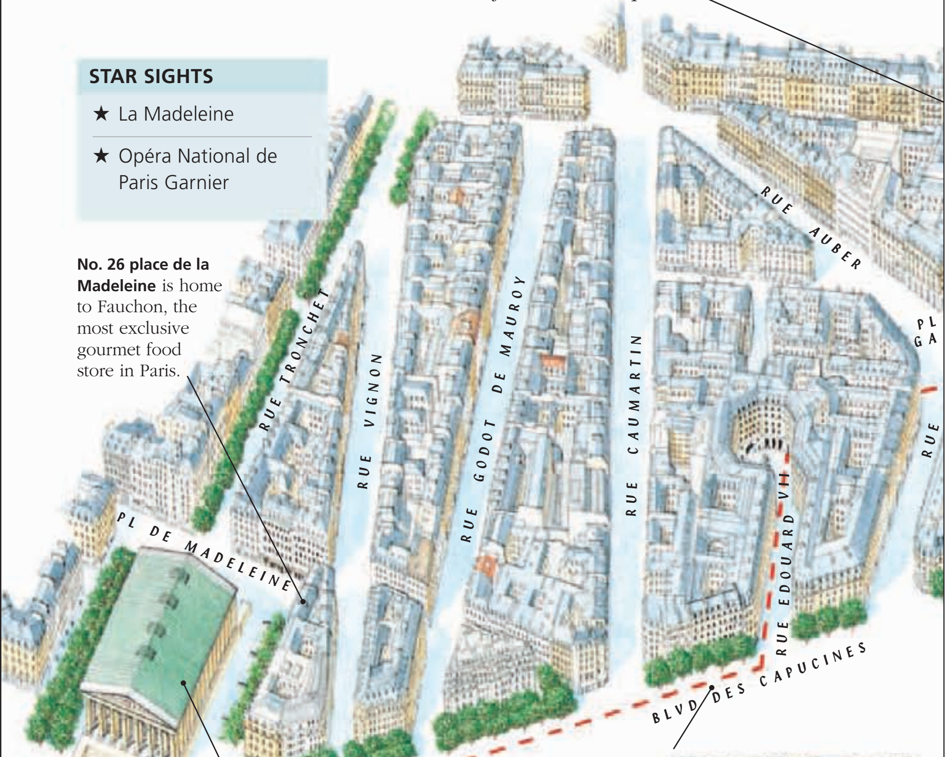
It has been said that the whole world will pass you by if you sit for long enough at the Café de la Paix (opposite the Opéra National Garnier). During the day, the area is a center of commerce, tourism, and shopping, with mammoth department stores lining the *grands boulevards*. In the evening, the clubs and theaters attract a totally different crowd, and the cafés along boulevard des Capucines throng with life.

Statue by Gumery on the Opéra

★ Opéra National de Paris Garnier
Dating from 1875, the grandiose opera house has come to symbolize the opulence of the Second Empire ❷

STAR SIGHTS

- ★ La Madeleine
- ★ Opéra National de Paris Garnier


RUE AUBER
PL GA
RUE
RUE TRONCHET
RUE VIGNON
RUE GODOT DE MAUROY
RUE CAUMARTIN
RUE EDOUARD VII
PL DE MADELEINE
BLVD DES CAPUCINES
BLVD DE LA MADELEINE

No. 26 place de la Madeleine is home to Fauchon, the most exclusive gourmet food store in Paris.

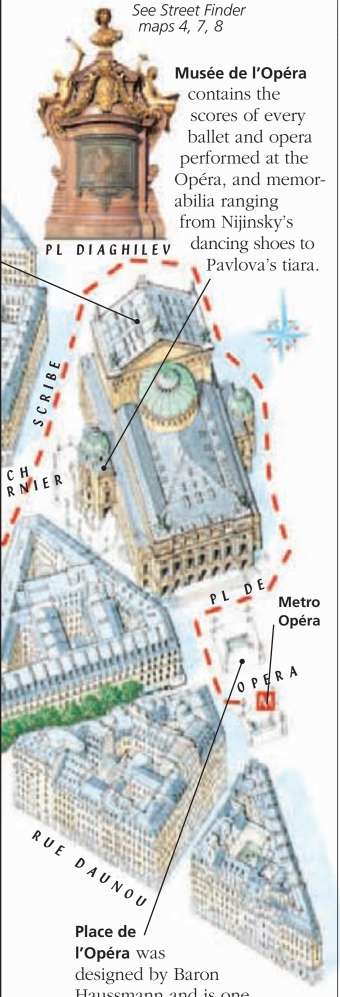
Metro Madeleine

Boulevard des Capucines (No. 14) is where the Lumière brothers staged the first public screening of a movie on December 28, 1895.

★ La Madeleine
The original model of the Madeleine can be seen at the Musée Carnavalet (see p91) ❶

TUILERIES
AND
OPERA
Seine
INVALIDES
THE LEFT BANK

LOCATOR MAP
See Street Finder maps 4, 7, 8



Musée de l'Opéra contains the scores of every ballet and opera performed at the Opéra, and memorabilia ranging from Nijinsky's dancing shoes to Pavlova's tiara.

Metro Opéra

Place de l'Opéra was designed by Baron Haussmann and is one of Paris's busiest intersections.

KEY

▬ ▬ ▬ Suggested route

0 meters **100**

0 yards **100**

Marochetti's *Mary Magdalene Ascending to Heaven* in La Madeleine

La Madeleine ❶

Pl de la Madeleine 75008. **Map** 3 C5. ***Tel*** *01 44 51 69 00.* **M** *Madeleine.* ○ *9am–7pm daily.* ✝ *12:30pm, 6:30pm Mon–Fri, 12:30pm Sat, 11am, 6pm Sun.* 📷 🛍 ***Concerts***

Modeled after a Greek temple, La Madeleine was begun in 1764 but not consecrated as a church until 1845. Before that, there were proposals to turn it into a stock exchange, a bank, or a theatre.

A colonnade of Corinthian columns encircles the building and supports a sculptured frieze. The inside is crowned by three ceiling domes and lavishly decorated with fine sculptures, rose marble, and gilt.

Opéra National de Paris Garnier ❷

Pl de l'Opéra 75009. **Map** 4 DF. ℹ *0892 89 90 90.* **M** *Opéra.* ○ *10am–4:30pm daily (until 1pm on matinée days).* ● *public hols.* ♿ ♿ **www**.operadeparis.fr

Sometimes compared to a giant wedding cake, this extravagant building was designed by Charles Garnier for Napoleon III in 1862. The Prussian War and the 1871 uprising delayed the opening of the building till 1875.

The interior is famous for its Grand Staircase made of white Carrara marble, topped by a huge chandelier, as well as for its auditorium bedecked in red velvet and gold, with a false ceiling painted by Chagall in 1964. Restored to its full glory, it is primarily used for dance, but shares operatic productions with the Opéra Bastille (see p153).

Grévin ❸

10 bd Montmartre 75009. **Map** 4 F4. ***Tel*** *01 47 70 85 05.* **M** *Grands Boulevards.* ○ *10am–6:30pm Mon–Fri (7pm Sat, Sun & school hols).* ♿ 🛍 **www**.grevin.com

Sign outside the Grévin

Founded in 1882, this is a Paris landmark, on a par with Madame Tussauds. The historical scenes include Louis XIV at Versailles and the arrest of Louis XVI. Notable figures from the worlds of art, politics, film, and sports are also on display. On the first floor is a holography museum devoted to optical tricks. The museum also houses a 320-seat theater.

Les Passages ❹

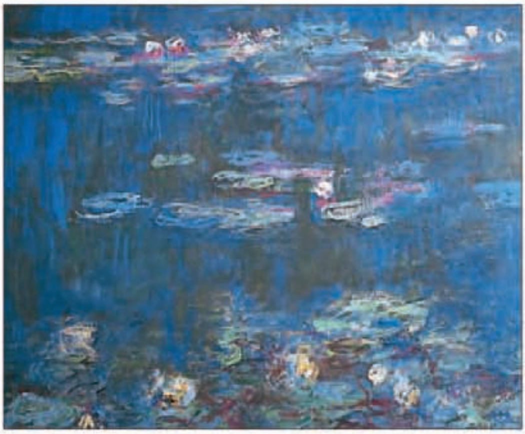
75002. **Map** 4 F5. **M** *Bourse.*

The early 19th-century glass-roofed shopping arcades (known as *galeries* or *passages*) are concentrated between boulevard Montmartre and rue St-Marc. They house an eclectic mixture of small stores selling anything from designer jewelry to rare books and art supplies. One of the most charming is the Galerie Vivienne (off the rue Vivienne or the rue des Petits Champs) with its mosaic floor and excellent tearoom.

Place Vendôme ❺

75001. **Map** 8 D1. **M** *Tuileries.*

Perhaps the best example of 18th-century elegance in the city, the architect Jules Hardouin-Mansart's royal square was begun in 1698. The original plan was to house academies and embassies behind its arcaded façades, but instead bankers moved in and created sumptuous mansions for themselves. The square's most famous residents include Frédéric Chopin, who died here in 1849 at No. 12, and César Ritz, who established his famous hotel at No. 15 in 1898.



Monet's *Waterlilies (Nymphéas)* on display in the Musée de l'Orangerie

Galerie Nationale du Jeu de Paume ❻

Jardin des Tuileries, place de la Concorde 75008. **Map** 7 C1. ***Tel*** *01 47 03 12 50.* **M** *Concorde.* ○ *noon–9pm Tue, noon–7pm Wed–Fri, 10am–7pm Sat.* ● *Jan 1, May 1, Dec 25.* ✋ ♿ ☛ 🛍 ☕
www.jeudepaume.org

The Jeu de Paume – literally "game of the palm" – was built as two royal tennis courts by Napoleon III in 1851 on the north side of the Tuileries gardens. The courts were later converted into an art gallery and exhibition space. The Jeu de Paume has rotating exhibitions of contemporary art and houses the Centre National de la Photographie. Its sister site is the Hôtel de Sully *(see p89).*

Place de la Concorde ❼

75008. **Map** 7 C1. **M** *Concorde.*

One of Europe's most magnificent and historic squares, covering over 20 acres (8 ha), the place de la Concorde was a swamp until the mid-18th century. It became the place Louis XV in 1775 when royal architect Jacques-Ange Gabriel was asked by the king to design a suitable setting for an equestrian statue of himself.

The monument, which lasted here less than 20 years, was replaced by the guillotine (the Black Widow, as it came to be known), and the square was renamed place de la Révolution. On January 21, 1793 Louis XVI was beheaded, followed by over 1,300 other victims including Marie Antoinette, Madame du Barry, Charlotte Corday (Marat's assassin), and revolutionary leaders Danton and Robespierre.

The blood-soaked square was optimistically renamed place de la Concorde after the Reign of Terror finally came to an end in 1794. A few decades later the 3,200-year-old Luxor obelisk was presented to King Louis-Philippe as a gift from the viceroy of Egypt (who also donated Cleopatra's Needle in London).

Flanking the rue Royale on the north side of the square are two of Gabriel's Neoclassical mansions, the Hôtel de la Marine and the exclusive Hôtel Crillon.

The 3,200-year-old obelisk from Luxor

Musée de l'Orangerie ❽

Jardin des Tuileries, place de la Concorde 75008. **Map** 7 C1. ***Tel*** *01 44 77 80 07.* **M** *Concorde.* ○ *9am–6pm Wed–Mon.* ● *1 May, 25 Dec.* ✋ 📷 ♿ ☛ *by appt.* 🛍
www.musee-orangerie.fr

Paintings from Claude Monet's crowning work, representing part of his waterlily series, fill the two oval upper floor rooms. Known as the *Nymphéas*, most of the canvases were painted between 1899 and 1921.

This superb work is complemented by the Walter-Guillaume collection, including 27 Renoirs, notably *Young Girls at the Piano,* works by Soutine and 14 Cézannes, including *The Red Rock*. Picasso is represented by works including *The Female Bathers*, and Rousseau by 9 paintings, notably *The Wedding*. Other works are by Matisse, Derain, Utrillo, and Modigliani.

Jardin des Tuileries ❾

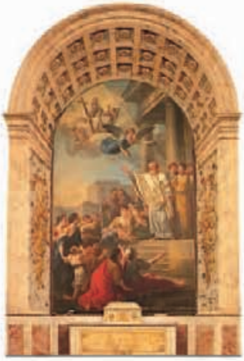
75001. **Map** 8 D1.
M *Tuileries, Concorde.*
○ *7am–9pm Apr–Sep; 7:30am–7:30pm Oct–Mar.*

These Neoclassical gardens once belonged to the Palais des Tuileries, which the Communards razed to the ground in 1871. They were laid out in the 17th century by André Le Nôtre, who created the broad central avenue and topiary arranged in geometric designs. Ongoing restoration has created a new garden with lime and chestnut trees, and striking modern sculptures.

St-Roch ⑩

296 rue St-Honoré 75001. **Map** 8 E1. ***Tel*** *01 42 44 13 20.* M *Tuileries.* ○ *8:30am–7pm daily.* ● *non-religious public hols.* 📷 ***Concerts***

This huge church was designed by Jacques Lemercier, architect of the Louvre, and its foundation stone was laid by Louis XIV in 1653. It is a treasure house of religious art, much of it from now-vanished churches and monasteries, and contains the tombs of the playwright Pierre Corneille, the royal gardener André Le Nôtre, and the philosopher Denis Diderot.



Vien's *St. Denis Preaching to the Gauls* (1767) in St-Roch

The Buren Columns in the main courtyard of the Palais Royal

Musée des Arts Décoratifs ⑪

Palais du Louvre, 107 rue de Rivoli 75001. **Map** 8 E2. ***Tel*** *01 44 55 57 50.* M *Palais Royal, Tuileries.* ○ *11am–6pm Tue–Fri (until 9pm Thu); 10am–6pm Sat & Sun.* ***Library*** ● *public hols.* ♿ **www**.lesartsdecoratifs.fr

Occupying the northwest wing of the Palais du Louvre (along with the Musée de la Publicité and the Musée de la Mode et du Textile), this museum offers an eclectic mix of decorative art and domestic design from the Middle Ages to the present day. The Art Nouveau and Art Deco rooms include a reconstruction of the home of couturier Jeanne Lanvin. Other floors show Louis XIV, XV, and XVI styles of decoration and furniture. Contemporary designers are also represented. The restaurant has breathtaking views over the Tuileries gardens.

Arc de Triomphe du Carrousel ⑫

Pl du Carrousel 75001.
Map 8 E2. M *Palais Royal.*

This rose-marble arch was built by Napoleon to celebrate various military triumphs, notably the Battle of Austerlitz in 1805. The crowning statues, added in 1828, are copies of the famous Horses of St Mark's which Napoleon stole from Venice, which he was subsequently forced to return after his defeat at Waterloo in 1815.

Palais Royal ⑬

Pl du Palais Royal 75001.
Map 8 E1. M *Palais Royal.*
Buildings ● *to the public.*

This former royal palace has had a turbulent history. It was built by Cardinal Richelieu in the early 17th century, passing to the Crown on his death and becoming the childhood home of Louis XIV. Under the 18th-century royal dukes of Orléans, it became the epicenter of brilliant gatherings, interspersed with periods of gambling and debauchery. It was from here that the clarion call to revolution roused the mobs to storm the Bastille on July 14, 1789.

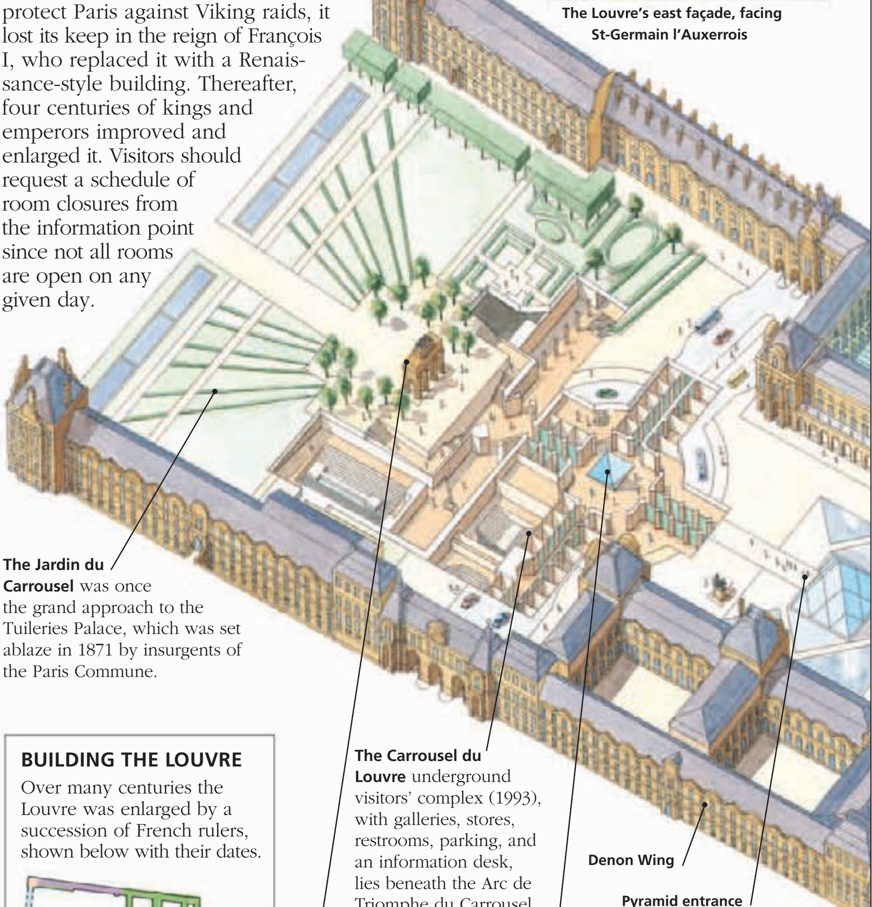
Today the southern section of the building houses the Councils of State and the Ministry of Culture. Just west of the palace at 2 rue de Richelieu is the Comédie Française, established by Louis XIV in 1680. Luxury stores occupy the rear section of the palace, where artists such as Colette and Cocteau once lived.

The Arc de Triomphe du Carrousel crowned by Victory riding a chariot

Musée du Louvre ⓮

The Musée du Louvre, containing one of the most important art collections in the world, has a history dating back to medieval times. First built as a fortress in 1190 by King Philippe-Auguste to protect Paris against Viking raids, it lost its keep in the reign of François I, who replaced it with a Renaissance-style building. Thereafter, four centuries of kings and emperors improved and enlarged it. Visitors should request a schedule of room closures from the information point since not all rooms are open on any given day.

The Louvre's east façade, facing St-Germain l'Auxerrois



The Jardin du Carrousel was once the grand approach to the Tuileries Palace, which was set ablaze in 1871 by insurgents of the Paris Commune.

The Carrousel du Louvre underground visitors' complex (1993), with galleries, stores, restrooms, parking, and an information desk, lies beneath the Arc de Triomphe du Carrousel.

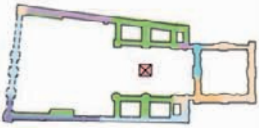
Denon Wing

Pyramid entrance

The inverted glass pyramid brings light to the subterranean complex, echoing the museum's new main entrance in the Cour Napoléon.

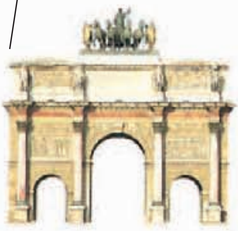
BUILDING THE LOUVRE

Over many centuries the Louvre was enlarged by a succession of French rulers, shown below with their dates.



MAJOR ALTERATIONS

🟧	Reign of François I (1515–47)
🟦	Catherine de' Medici (about 1560)
🟪	Reign of Henri IV (1589–1610)
🟩	Reign of Louis XIII (1610–43)
🟧	Reign of Louis XIV (1643–1715)
🟪	Reign of Napoleon I (1804–15)
🟩	Reign of Napoleon III (1852–70)
🟧	IM Pei (1989) (architect)



★ Arc de Triomphe du Carrousel

This triumphal arch was built to celebrate Napoleon's military victories in 1805.

STAR FEATURES

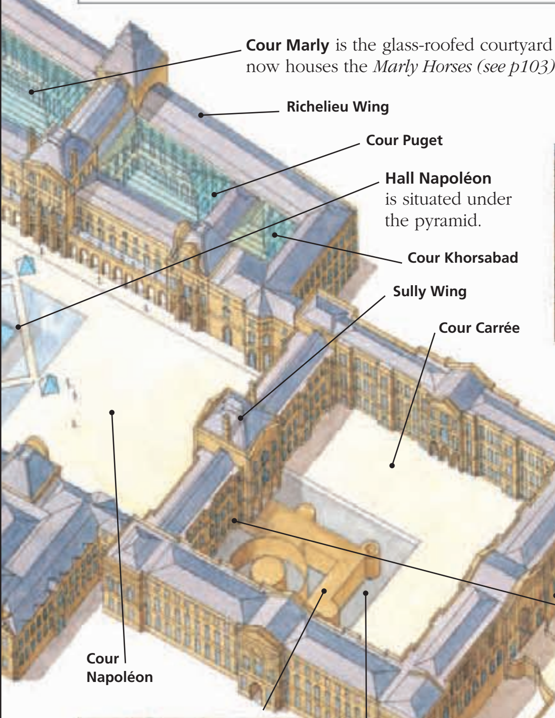
- ★ Perrault Colonnade
- ★ Medieval Moats
- ★ Arc de Triomphe du Carrousel

THE GLASS PYRAMID

Plans for the modernization and expansion of the Louvre were first conceived in 1981. They included the transfer of the Ministry of Finance from the Richelieu wing of the Louvre to new offices elsewhere, as well as a new main entrance designed by architect I.M. Pei in 1989. Made of metal and glass, the pyramid enables the visitor to see the buildings around the palace, while allowing light down into the underground visitors' reception area.

VISITORS' CHECKLIST

Map 12 E2. *Automatic ticket booths at Carrousel du Louvre, 99 rue de Rivoli, 75001.* M *Palais Royal, Musée du Louvre.* 🚌 *21, 24, 27, 39, 48, 68, 69, 72, 81, 95.* RER *Châtelet-Les-Halles.* ⛴ *Louvre.* P *Carrousel du Louvre (entrance via av du Général Lemonnier); pl du Louvre, rue St-Honoré.* ○ *9am–6pm Mon, Thu, Sat, & Sun, 9am–10pm Wed & Fri. History of the Louvre rooms open Sat, Sun only.* ● *1 Jan, 1 May, 25 Dec.* 🎫 *(free 1st Sun of each month and for under 18; reduced price for Nocturnals after 6pm).* ♿ *partial 01 40 20 59 90.* ☎ *phone 01 40 20 52 09.* 🎧 ***Lectures, films, concerts*** *01 40 20 55 55.* 🍴 🛍 ☕ **www**.louvre.fr ***Advance bookings***: **www**.ticketweb.com



Cour Marly is the glass-roofed courtyard that now houses the *Marly Horses (see p103).*

Richelieu Wing

Cour Puget

Hall Napoléon is situated under the pyramid.

Cour Khorsabad

Sully Wing

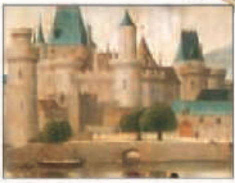
Cour Carrée

Cour Napoléon

★ Perrault's Colonnade

The east façade, with its majestic rows of columns, was built by Claude Perrault, who worked on the Louvre with Louis Le Vau in the mid-17th century.

The Salle des Caryatides is named after the four monumental statues created by Jean Goujon in 1550 to support the upper gallery. Built for Henri II, it is the oldest room in the palace.



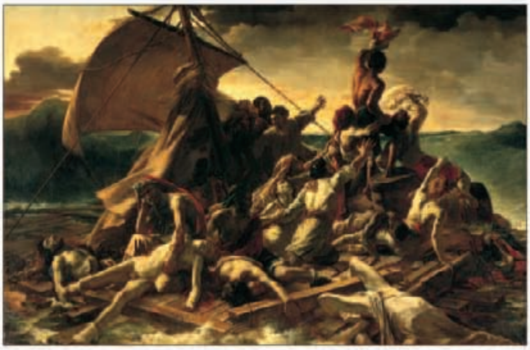
The Louvre of Charles V
In about 1360, Charles V transformed Philippe-Auguste's old fortress, with its distinctive tower and keep, into a royal residence.

★ Medieval Moats

The base of the twin towers and the drawbridge support of Philippe-Auguste's fortress can be seen in the excavated area.

Exploring the Louvre's Collection

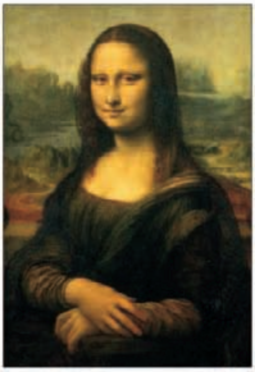
Owing to the vast size of the Louvre's collection, it is useful to set a few viewing priorities before starting. The collection of European paintings (1400–1848) is comprehensive, with over half the works by French artists. The extensively renovated departments of Oriental, Egyptian, Greek, Etruscan, and Roman antiquities feature numerous new acquisitions and rare treasures. The varied display of *objets d'art* includes furniture and jewelry.



***The Raft of the Medusa* (1819) by Théodore Géricault**

EUROPEAN PAINTING: 1200 TO 1848

Painting from northern Europe (Flemish, Dutch, German, and English) is well covered. One of the earliest Flemish works is Jan van Eyck's *Madonna of the Chancellor Rolin* (about 1435), showing the Chancellor of Burgundy kneeling in prayer before the Virgin and Child. Hieronymus Bosch's *Ship of Fools* (1500) is a satirical account of the futility of human existence.



***Mona Lisa* (about 1504) by Leonardo da Vinci**

In the fine Dutch collection, Rembrandt's *Self-portrait*, his *Disciples at Emmaus* (1648), and *Bathsheba* (1654) are examples of the artist's genius.

The three major German painters of the 15th and 16th centuries are represented by important works. There is a youthful *Self-portrait* (1493) by Albrecht Dürer, a *Venus* (1529) by Lucas Cranach, and a portrait of the humanist scholar Erasmus by Hans Holbein.

The impressive collection of Italian paintings is arranged in chronological order from 1200 to 1800. The father figures of the early Renaissance, Cimabue and Giotto, are here, as is Fra Angelico, with his *Coronation of the Virgin* (1430–32), and Raphaël, with his stately portrait of Count Baldassare Castiglione (1514–15). Several paintings by Leonardo da Vinci are on display, for instance the *Virgin with the Infant Jesus and St. Anne*, which is as enchanting as his *Mona Lisa*.

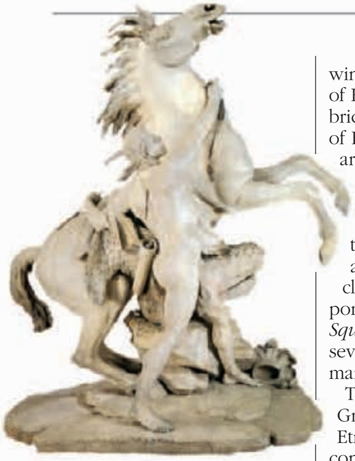
The Louvre's fine collection of French painting ranges from the 14th century to 1848. Paintings after this date are housed in the Musée d'Orsay *(see pp120–21)*. Outstanding is Jean Fouquet's portrait of Charles VII (1450–55). The great 18th-century painter of melancholy, J.A. Watteau, is represented, as is J.H. Fragonard, master of the Rococo, whose delightfully frivolous subjects are evident in *The Bathers* from 1770.

EUROPEAN SCULPTURE: 1100 TO 1848

Early Flemish and German sculpture in the collection has many masterpieces such as Tilman Riemenschneider's *Virgin of the Annunciation* from the end of the 15th century and a life-sized nude figure of the penitent Mary Magdalen by Gregor Erhart (early 16th century). An important work of Flemish sculpture is Adrian de Vries's long-limbed *Mercury and Psyche* from 1593, which was originally made for the court of Rudolph II in Prague.

The French section opens with early Romanesque works, such as the figure of Christ by a 12th-century Burgundian sculptor, and a head of St. Peter. With its eight black-hooded mourners, the late 15th-century tomb of Philippe Pot (a high-ranking official in Burgundy) is one of the more unusual pieces. Diane de Poitiers, Henri II's mistress, had a large figure of her namesake Diana, goddess of the hunt, installed in the courtyard of her castle west of Paris. It is now in the Louvre.

The tomb of Philippe Pot (late 15th century) by Antoine le Moiturier



The celebrated *Marly Horses* (1745) by Guillaume Coustou

The works of French sculptor Pierre Puget (1620–94) have been assembled in the Cour Puget. They include a figure of Milo of Crotona, the Greek athlete who got his hands caught in the cleft of a tree stump and was eaten by a lion. The wild horses of Marly now stand in the Cour Marly, surrounded by other masterpieces of French sculpture, including Jean-Antoine Houdon's early 19th-century busts of famous men such as Diderot and Voltaire.

The collection of Italian sculpture includes such splendid exhibits as Michelangelo's *Slaves* and Benvenuto Cellini's Fontainebleau *Nymph*.

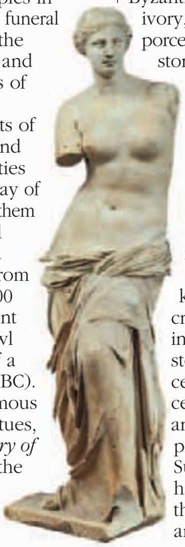
ORIENTAL, EGYPTIAN, GREEK, ETRUSCAN, AND ROMAN ANTIQUITIES

A substantial overhaul of the Louvre has boosted its collection of antiquities, which range from the Neolithic period to the fall of the Roman Empire. Among the exhibits are Greek and Roman glassware dating from the 6th century BC. Important works of Mesopotamian art include one of the world's oldest legal documents, a basalt block bearing the code of the Babylonian King Hammurabi, dating from about 1700 BC.

The warlike Assyrians are represented by delicate carvings and a spectacular reconstruction of part of Sargon II's (722–705 BC) palace with its winged bulls. A fine example of Persian art is the enameled brickwork depicting the king of Persia's personal guard of archers (5th century BC).

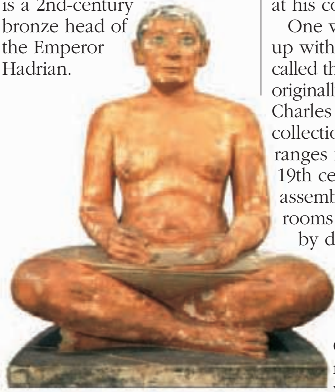
Most Egyptian art was made for the dead, who were provided with the things they needed for the afterlife. Examples include the lifelike funeral portraits such as the *Squatting Scribe*, and several sculptures of married couples.

The departments of Greek, Roman and Etruscan antiquities contain a vast array of fragments, among them some exceptional pieces. There is a geometric head from the Cyclades (2700 BC) and an elegant swan-necked bowl hammered out of a gold sheet (2500 BC). The two most famous Greek marble statues, the *Winged Victory of Samothrace* and the *Venus de Milo*, both belong to the Hellenistic period (late 3rd to 2nd century BC), when more natural-looking human forms were produced.



***Venus de Milo* (Greece, late 3rd–early 2nd century BC)**

The undisputed star of the Etruscan collection is the terra cotta sarcophagus of a married couple who look as though they are attending an eternal banquet, while the highlight of the Roman section is a 2nd-century bronze head of the Emperor Hadrian.



***Squatting Scribe* (about 2500 BC), a lifelike Egyptian funeral sculpture**

OBJETS D'ART

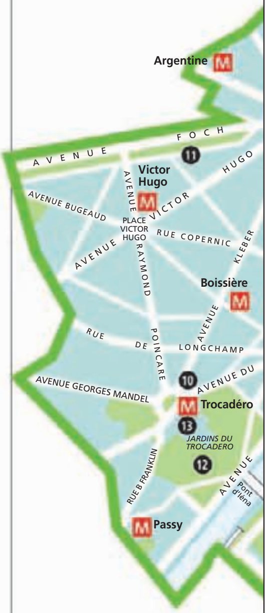
The catchall term *objets d'art* (art objects) covers a vast range of items: jewelry, furniture, clocks, watches, sundials, tapestries, miniatures, silver and glassware, cutlery, Byzantine and Parisian carved ivory, Limoges enamels, porcelain, French and Italian stoneware, rugs, snuffboxes, scientific instruments, and armor. The Louvre has well over 8,000 pieces, from many ages and regions.

Many of these precious objects came from the Abbey of St-Denis, where the kings of France were crowned. The treasures include a serpentine stone plate from the 1st century AD with a 9th-century border of gold and precious stones, a porphyry vase which Suger, Abbot of St-Denis, had mounted in gold in the shape of an eagle, and the golden scepter made for King Charles V in around 1380.

The French crown jewels include the coronation crowns of Louis XV and Napoleon, scepters, swords, and other accessories of the coronation ceremonies. On view also is the Regent, one of the purest diamonds in the world, which Louis XV wore at his coronation in 1722.

One whole room is taken up with a series of tapestries called the *Hunts of Maximilian,* originally executed for Emperor Charles V in 1530. The large collection of French furniture ranges from the 16th to the 19th centuries and is assembled by period, or in rooms devoted to donations by distinguished collectors. On display are pieces by exceptionally prominent furniture-makers such as André-Charles Boulle, cabinetmaker to Louis XIV, who worked at the Louvre in the late 17th to mid-18th centuries.

Gilded bronze statues by a number of sculptors, decorating the central square of the Palais de Chaillot


Argentine
AVENUE
FOCH
11
Victor Hugo
HUGO
AVENUE BUGEAUD
AVENUE
VICTOR
PLACE VICTOR HUGO
RUE COPERNIC
KLEBER
AVENUE
RAYMOND
Boissière
AVENUE
RUE
DE
POINCARE
LONGCHAMP
10
AVENUE DU
AVENUE GEORGES MANDEL
Trocadéro
13
JARDINS DU TROCADERO
12
RUE B FRANKLIN
AVENUE
Pont d'Iéna
Passy

CHAMPS-ELYSÉES AND INVALIDES

The River Seine bisects this area, much of which is built on a monumental scale, from the imposing 18th-century buildings of Les Invalides to the Art Nouveau avenues surrounding the Eiffel Tower. Two of Paris's grandest avenues dominate the neighborhood to the north of the Seine: the Champs-Elysées has many fine hotels and stores but today is more downmarket; while the more chic rue du Faubourg St-Honoré has the heavily guarded Palais de l'Elysée. The village of Chaillot was absorbed into the city in the 19th century, and many of its opulent Second Empire mansions are now embassies or company headquarters. Streets around the place du Trocadéro and Palais de Chaillot are packed full of museums and elegant cafés.

Ornate lamppost on Pont Alexandre III

SIGHTS AT A GLANCE

Historic Buildings and Streets
Avenue des Champs-Elysées ②
Palais de l'Elysée ③
Les Egouts ⑭
No. 29 Avenue Rapp ⑰
Champ-de-Mars ⑱
Ecole Militaire ⑲
Hôtel des Invalides ㉑

Museums and Galleries
Petit Palais ④
Grand Palais ⑤
Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris ⑦
Musée Galliera ⑧
Musée National des Arts Asiatiques Guimet ⑨
Cité de l'Architecture et du Patrimoine ⑩
Musée Dapper ⑪
Palais de Chaillot ⑬
Musée du Quai Branly ⑮
Musée de l'Armée ㉒
Musée Rodin ㉕
Musée Maillol ㉗

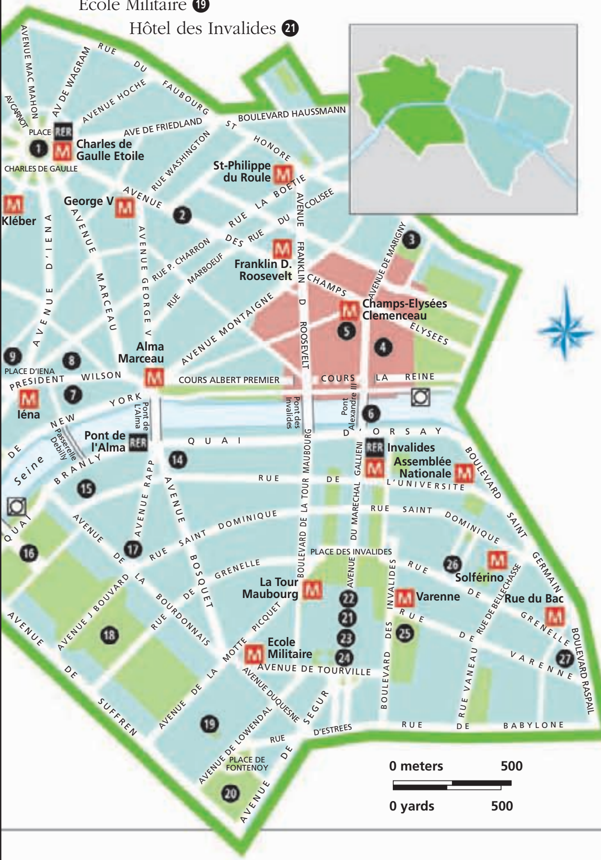
Churches
St-Louis-des-Invalides ㉓
Dôme Church ㉔
Sainte-Clotilde ㉖

Monuments and Fountains
Arc de Triomphe ①
Eiffel Tower p113 ⑯

Modern Architecture
UNESCO ⑳

Gardens
Jardins du Trocadéro ⑫

Bridges
Pont Alexandre III ⑥


AVENUE MAC MAHON
AV CARNOT
AV DE WAGRAM
RUE DU FAUBOURG ST HONORE
AVENUE HOCHE
BOULEVARD HAUSSMANN
AVE DE FRIEDLAND
PLACE CHARLES DE GAULLE
Charles de Gaulle Etoile
RUE WASHINGTON
St-Philippe du Roule
RUE LA BOETIE
AVENUE D'IENA
Kléber
George V
AVENUE MARCEAU
AVENUE GEORGE V
RUE P. CHARRON
RUE MARBOEUF
RUE DU COLISEE
AVENUE FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT
Franklin D. Roosevelt
AVENUE DE MARIGNY
CHAMPS ELYSEES
Champs-Elysées Clemenceau
AVENUE MONTAIGNE
Alma Marceau
PLACE D'IENA
AVENUE DU PRESIDENT WILSON
COURS ALBERT PREMIER
COURS LA REINE
Iéna
AVENUE DE NEW YORK
Pont de l'Alma
Passerelle Debilly
Pont des Invalides
Pont Alexandre III
QUAI D'ORSAY
Seine
QUAI BRANLY
Invalides
Assemblée Nationale
RUE DE L'UNIVERSITE
BOULEVARD SAINT GERMAIN
AVENUE RAPP
AVENUE BOSQUET
RUE SAINT DOMINIQUE
BOULEVARD DE LA TOUR MAUBOURG
AVENUE DU MARECHAL GALLIENI
PLACE DES INVALIDES
Solférino
Rue du Bac
RUE DE GRENELLE
La Tour Maubourg
Varenne
RUE DE VARENNE
BOULEVARD DES INVALIDES
RUE DE BELLECHASSE
AVENUE J BOUVARD
RUE DE LA BOURDONNAIS
RUE PICQUET
AVENUE DE LA MOTTE
Ecole Militaire
AVENUE DE TOURVILLE
AVENUE DUQUESNE
AVENUE DE SUFFREN
AVENUE DE SEGUR
RUE D'ESTREES
RUE VANEAU
RUE DE BABYLONE
BOULEVARD RASPAIL
AVENUE DE LOWENDAL
PLACE DE FONTENOY
0 meters 500
0 yards 500

GETTING THERE

Metro stations in this area include Etoile, Trocadéro, and Champs-Elysées. Bus routes 42 and 73 serve the Champs-Elysées; routes 82 and 69 serve avenue de Suffren and rue St-Dominique respectively.

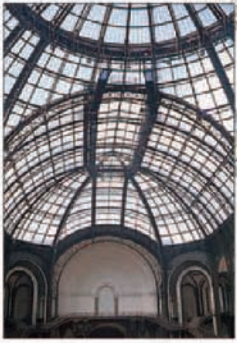
KEY

🟥 Street by Street map *pp106–7*
Ⓜ Metro station
RER RER station
⛴ Batobus boarding point
ℹ Tourist information

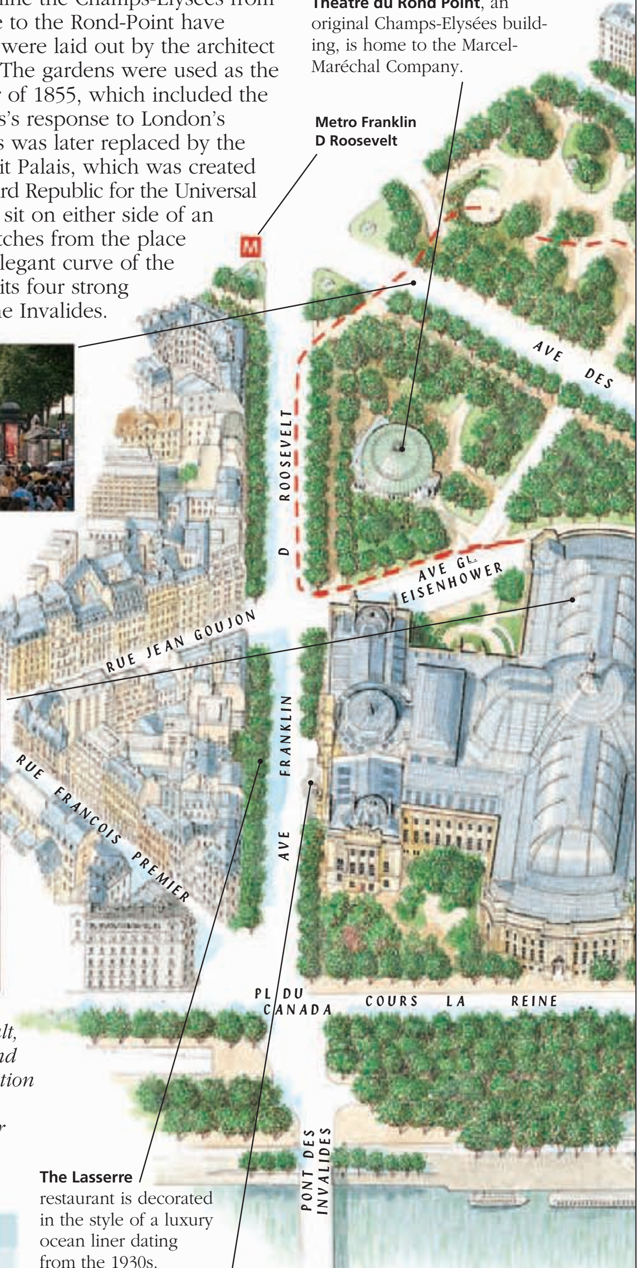
Street by Street: Champs-Elysées

The formal gardens that line the Champs-Elysées from the place de la Concorde to the Rond-Point have changed little since they were laid out by the architect Jacques Hittorff in 1838. The gardens were used as the setting for the World Fair of 1855, which included the Palais de l'Industrie, Paris's response to London's Crystal Palace. The Palais was later replaced by the Grand Palais and the Petit Palais, which was created as a showpiece of the Third Republic for the Universal Exhibition of 1900. They sit on either side of an impressive vista that stretches from the place Clémenceau across the elegant curve of the Pont Alexandre III, with its four strong anchoring columns, to the Invalides.

★ Avenue des Champs-Elysées
This was the setting for the victory parades following the two World Wars ❷



★ Grand Palais
Designed by Charles Girault, and built between 1897 and 1900, this elaborate exhibition hall with its splendid glass dome is frequently used for major exhibitions ❺



Théâtre du Rond Point, an original Champs-Elysées building, is home to the Marcel-Maréchal Company.

Metro Franklin D Roosevelt

The Lasserre restaurant is decorated in the style of a luxury ocean liner dating from the 1930s.

Palais de la Découverte, a museum of scientific discovery, was originally opened in the Grand Palais for the World Fair of 1937.

STAR SIGHTS

- ★ Avenue des Champs-Elysées
- ★ Grand Palais
- ★ Petit Palais

KEY

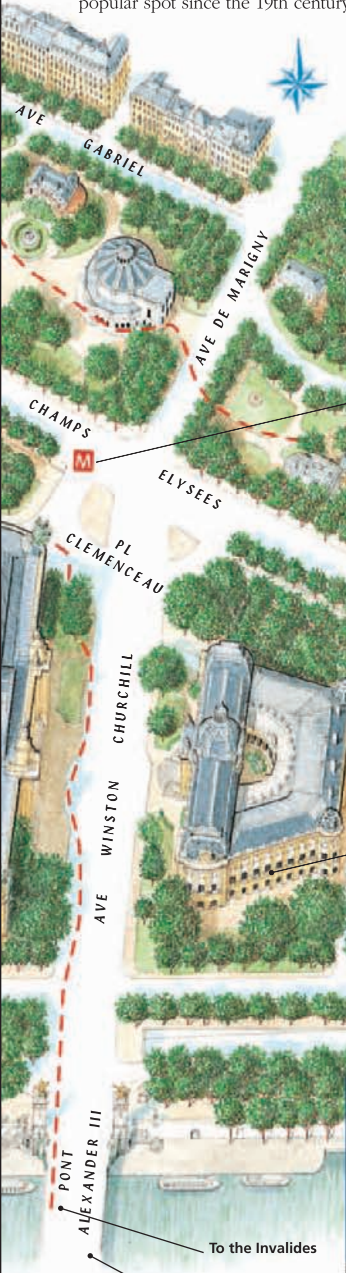
▬ ▬ ▬ Suggested route

0 meters 100

0 yards 100

For hotels and restaurants in this region see pp550–5 and pp600–6

The Jardins des Champs-Elysées, with their fountains, flowerbeds, and pleasure pavilions, have been a popular spot since the 19th century.



CHAMPS-ELYSEES AND INVALIDES
Seine

LOCATOR MAP

See Street Finder maps 2, 3, 6, 7

Metro Champs-Elysées-Clémenceau

To place de la Concorde

★ Petit Palais

The art collections of the city of Paris are housed here. They contain 19th-century works from objets d'art to paintings by the Barbizon School ④

To the Invalides

Pont Alexandre III

This ornate, single-span structure symbolizes the optimism of the Belle Epoque at the turn of the 20th century.

The east façade of the Arc de Triomphe

Arc de Triomphe ①

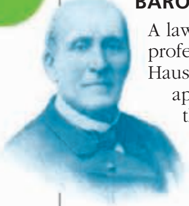
Place Charles de Gaulle, 75008. **Map** 2 D4. M *Charles de Gaulle-Etoile.* ***Tel*** *01 55 37 73 77.* ***Museum*** ○ *Apr–Sep: 10am–11pm daily; Oct–Mar: 10am–10.30pm daily (last adm 30 mins earlier).* ● *Jan 1, May 1, May 8, Jul 14, Nov 11, Dec 25.* ♿ 📷 🚫 🛍

After his greatest victory, the Battle of Austerlitz in 1805, Napoleon promised his men they would "go home beneath triumphal arches." The first stone of what was to become the world's most famous triumphal arch was laid the following year. But disruptions to architect Jean Chalgrin's plans and the demise of Napoleonic power delayed completion. Standing 164 ft (50 m) high, the Arc is encrusted with reliefs, shields, and sculptures. The viewing platform offers spendid views.

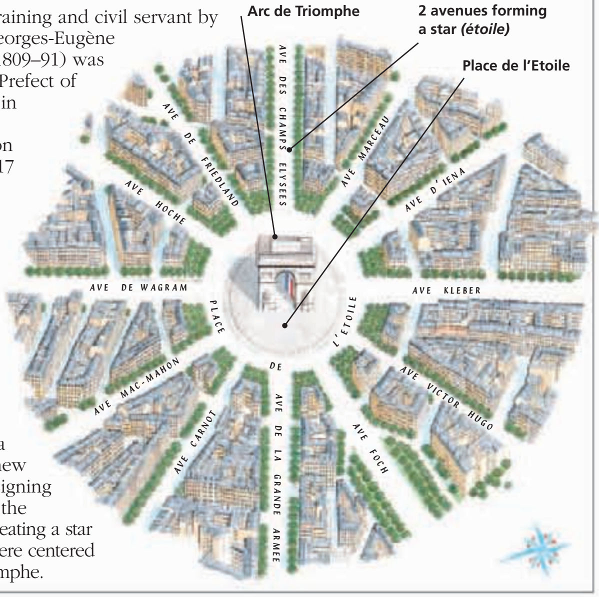
On November 11, 1920 the body of the Unknown Soldier was placed beneath the arch to commemorate the dead of World War I. The tomb's eternal flame is lit every evening.

High relief by J.P. Corot, celebrating the Triumph of Napoleon

BARON HAUSSMANN



A lawyer by training and civil servant by profession, Georges-Eugène Haussmann (1809–91) was appointed Prefect of the Seine in 1852 by Napoleon III. For 17 years Haussmann was responsible for the urban modernization of Paris. With a team of the best architects and engineers of the day, he demolished the crowded, insanitary streets of the medieval city and created a well-ventilated and ordered capital within a geometrical grid. The new scheme involved redesigning the area at one end of the Champs-Elysées and creating a star of 12 avenues, which were centered on the new Arc de Triomphe.


Arc de Triomphe
2 avenues forming a star *(étoile)*
Place de l'Etoile
AVE DES CHAMPS ELYSEES
AVE DE FRIEDLAND
AVE MARCEAU
AVE HOCHE
AVE D' IENA
AVE DE WAGRAM
AVE KLEBER
PLACE DE L'ETOILE
AVE MAC-MAHON
AVE VICTOR HUGO
AVE CARNOT
AVE DE LA GRANDE ARMEE
AVE FOCH

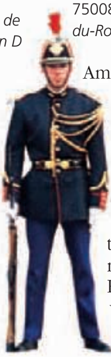
Avenue des Champs-Elysées ❷

75008. **Map** 3 A5. M *Charles de Gaulle-Etoile, George V, Franklin D Roosevelt, Champs-Elysées - Clemenceau, Concorde.*

The majestic avenue "of the Elysian Fields" (the name refers to a mythical Greek heaven for heroes), first laid out in the 1660s by the landscape designer André Le Nôtre, forms a 2 mile (3 km) straight line from the huge place de la Concorde to the Arc de Triomphe. The 19th century saw it transformed from horseride into elegant boulevard. Today it's a crowded tourist trap with notorious traffic, but the Champs-Elysées keeps its style, its memories, and a special place in the French heart. National parades are held here, the finish of the annual Tour de France bicycle race is always in the Champs-Elysées, and, above all, it is where Parisians instinctively go at times of great national celebration.

Palais de l'Elysée ❸

55 rue du Faubourg-St-Honoré 75008. **Map** 3 B5. M *St-Philippe-du-Roule.* ● *to the public.*



Elysée guard

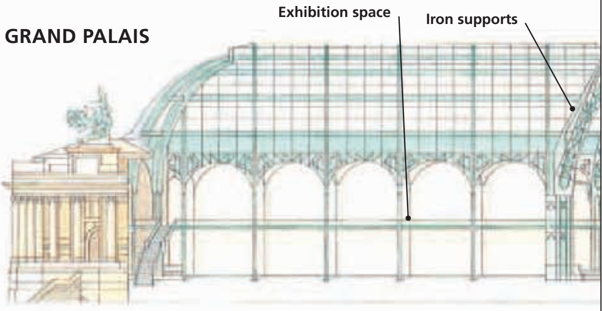
Amid splendid gardens, the Elysée Palace was built in 1718 and has been the official residence of the President of the Republic since 1873. Several occupants left their mark. Louis XV's mistress, Madame de Pompadour, had the whole site enlarged. After the Revolution, it became a dance hall. In the 19th century, it was home to Napoleon's sister (Caroline Murat) and his wife, Empress Josephine. The President's Apartments are today on the first floor.

Petit Palais ❹

Av Winston Churchill 75008. **Map** 7 B1. ***Tel*** *01 53 43 40 00.* M *Champs-Elysées-Clemenceau.* ○ *10am–6pm Tue–Sun.* ● *public hols.* ✋ ✋ *for exhibitions.* 📷 ♿ ☕

Built for the Universal Exhibition in 1900 to stage a major display of French art, this jewel of a building was renovated in 2005 and houses the Musée des Beaux-Arts de la Ville de Paris. The architect, Charles Girault, arranged the palace around a semicircular

GRAND PALAIS


Exhibition space
Iron supports

For hotels and restaurants in this region see pp550–5 and pp600–6

Pont Alexandre III, built 1896–1900 for the Universal Exhibition

courtyard and garden, similar in style to the Grand Palais. Permanent exhibits, housed on the Champs-Elysées side, include the Dutuit Collection of medieval and Renaissance *objets d'art*, paintings, and drawings; the Tuck Collection of 18th-century furniture and *objets d'art*; and the City of Paris collection, with work by Ingres, Delacroix, and Courbet, and the landscape painters of the Barbizon School. Temporary exhibitions are housed in the Cours de la Reine wing.

Entrance to the Petit Palais

Grand Palais ❺

Porte A, av Général Eisenhower 75008. **Map** 7 A1. ***Tel*** *01 44 13 17 17.* Ⓜ *Champs-Elysées-Clemenceau.* ○ *for temporary exhibitions only; 10am–8pm Wed–Mon.* ● *1 May, 25 Dec.* ▨ 📷 ♿ ✋ 🎧 ☕ 🛍 ***Palais de la Decouverte:*** av Franklin D. Roosevelt 75008. ***Tel*** *01 56 43 20 21.* Ⓜ *Franklin D. Roosevelt.* ○ *9:30am–6pm Tue–Sat, 10am–7pm Sun & public hols.* ▨ ☕ 🛍 **www**.grandpalais.fr

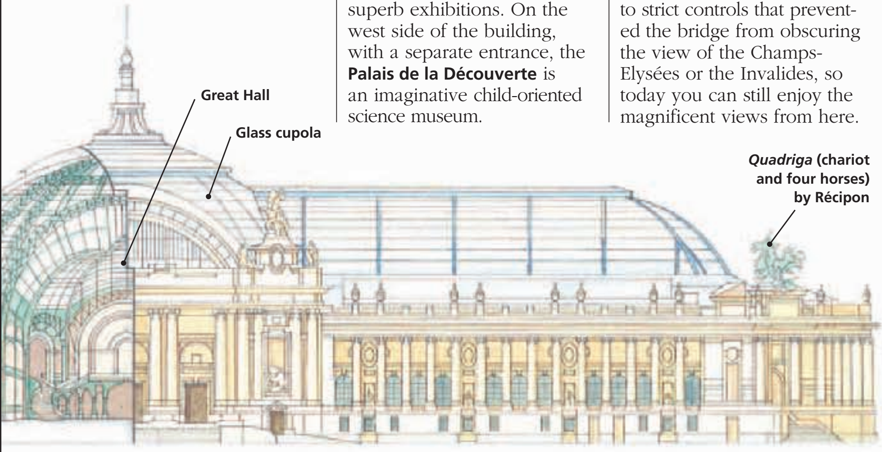
Built at the same time as the Petit Palais opposite, this huge, glass-roofed palace has a fine Classical façade adorned with statuary and Art Nouveau ironwork. Bronze flying horses and chariots stand at the four corners. The Great Hall and the glass cupola can be admired during the palace's superb exhibitions. On the west side of the building, with a separate entrance, the **Palais de la Découverte** is an imaginative child-oriented science museum.

Pont Alexandre III ❻

75008. **Map** 7 A1. Ⓜ *Champs-Elysées-Clemenceau.*

This is Paris's prettiest bridge, with exuberant Art Nouveau decoration of gilt and bronze lamps, cupids and cherubs, nymphs, and winged horses at either end. It was built between 1896 and 1900 to commemorate the 1892 French-Russian alliance, and in time for the Universal Exhibition in 1900. Pont Alexandre III was named after Tsar Alexander III (father of Nicholas II), who laid the foundation stone in October 1896.

The style of the bridge reflects that of the Grand Palais, to which it leads on the Right Bank. The construction of the bridge is a marvel of 19th-century engineering. It consists of an 18-ft (6-m) high single-span steel arch across the Seine. The design was subject to strict controls that prevented the bridge from obscuring the view of the Champs-Elysées or the Invalides, so today you can still enjoy the magnificent views from here.


Great Hall
Glass cupola
Quadriga (chariot and four horses) by Récipon

Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris ❼

Palais du Tokyo, 11 av du Président-Wilson 75016. **Map** 6 E1. ***Tel*** *01 53 67 40 00.* M *Iéna, Alma-Marceau.* ○ *10am-6pm Tue-Sun (until 10pm Thu for temporary exhibitions).* ● *Jan 1.* ☞ *for temporary exhibitions.* ♿ ☞ ☕ 🛍 **www**.mam.paris.fr

This museum covers trends in 20th-century art and is located in the east wing of the Palais de Tokyo. The Fauves and Cubists are well represented here. Highlights include Raoul Dufy's gigantic mural, *The Spirit of Electricity* (created for the 1937 World Fair), and Matisse's *The Dance* (1932). There is also a collection of Art Deco furniture.

Musée Galliera ❽

10 ave Pierre 1er de Serbie 75116. **Map** 6 D1. ***Tel*** *01 56 52 86 00.* M *Iéna, Alma–Marceau.* ○ *10am–6pm daily & 2–6pm some public hols, but check as only open for exhibitions.* ☞ ***Children's room.*** **www**.galliera.paris.fr

Devoted to the evolution of fashion, this museum, also known as the Musée de la Mode et du Costume, is housed in the Renaissance-style palace built for the Duchesse Maria de Ferrari Galliera in 1892. The collection includes more than 100,000 outfits and fashion accessories from the 18th century to the present day. Donations have been made by such fashionable women as Baronne Hélène de Rothschild and Princess Grace of Monaco. Eminent couturiers such as Balmain and Balenciaga have donated their designs to the museum.

Often extremely fragile, the fashion exhibits are displayed in rotation, usually in two major exhibitions each year. These shows can highlight a particular couturier's career or explore a single theme.

Trocadéro fountains in front of the Palais de Chaillot

Musée Dapper ⓫

35bis rue Paul-Valéry, 75016. **Map** 2 D5. ***Tel*** *01 45 00 91 75.* M *Victor-Hugo.* ○ *11am– 7pm Wed–Mon.* ☞ **www**.dapper.com/fr

A world-class ethnographic research center, this is one of France's premier showcases of African art and culture. Located in an attractive building with an "African" garden, it is a treasure house of color and powerful, evocative work from the black nations. The focus is on pre-colonial folk arts, with sculpture, carvings, and tribal work, but there is later art, too. The highlight is tribal masks, with a dazzling, extraordinary array of richly carved religious, ritual, and funerary masks, as well as theatrical ones used for comic, magical, or symbolic performances.

Jardins du Trocadéro ⓬

75016. **Map** 6 D2. M *Trocadéro.* **Cinéaqua** ***Tel*** *01 40 69 23 23.* ○ *10am–8pm daily.* ☞

These beautiful gardens cover 25 acres (10 ha). Their centerpiece is a long rectangular ornamental pool, bordered by stone and bronze-gilt statues, which looks spectacular at night when the fountains are illuminated. The statues include *Woman* by Georges Braque and *Horse* by Georges Lucien Guyot. On either side of the pool, the slopes of the Chaillot hill lead gently down to the Seine and the Pont d'Iéna. Cinéaqua, the hi-tech aquarium here, has over 40 sharks and a petting pool for children.

Palais de Chaillot ⓭

Pl du Trocadéro 75016. **Map** 5 C2. M *Trocadéro.* **Théâtre National de Chaillot** ***Tel*** *01 53 65 30 00.* **Musée de l'Homme** ***Tel*** *01 44 05 72 72.* ○ *Wed–Mon.* **Musée de la Marine** ***Tel*** *01 53 65 69 69.* ○ *Wed–Mon.* ● *Jan 1, May 1, Dec 25.*

The Palais, with its huge, curved colonnaded wings each culminating in a vast pavilion, has three museums and a theater. Designed in Neoclassical style for the 1937 Paris Exhibition by Azéma, Louis-Auguste Boileau, and Jacques Carlu, it is adorned with sculptures and low reliefs. On the walls of the pavilions are gold inscriptions that were written by the poet and essayist, Paul Valéry. The square *(parvis)* between the two pavilions has bronze

Musée National des Arts Asiatiques Guimet ⑨

6 pl d'Iéna 75016. **Map** 6 D1. ***Tel*** *01 56 52 53 00.* M *Iéna.* ○ *10am–6pm Wed–Mon.* 🎧 📷 ♿ ☕ *Panthéon Bouddhique, 19 av d'Iéna.* ***Tel*** *01 40 73 88 00.* **www**.guimet.fr

One of the world's leading museums of Asian art, the Guimet has a fine collection of Cambodian (Khmer) art. It was set up in Lyon in 1879 by Emile Guimet, and then moved to Paris in 1884. It includes a comprehensive Asian research center.

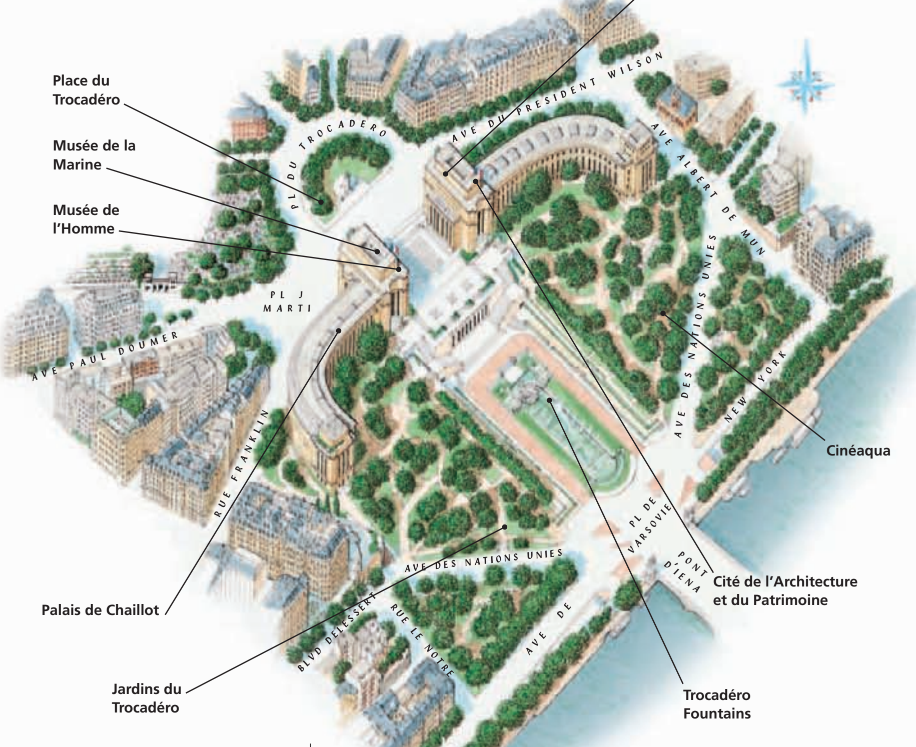
Buddha head from Musée Guimet

Cité de l'Architecture et du Patrimoine ⑩

Palais de Chaillot, pl du Trocadéro 75016. **Map** 5 C2. ***Tel*** *01 58 51 52 00.* M *Trocadéro.* ○ *11am–7pm Wed–Mon (until 9pm Thu).* 🎧 📷 🍴 🛍 **www**.citechaillot.fr

This museum charts the development of French architecture through the ages and includes three-dimensional models of great French cathedrals, such as Chartres *(see pp308–11)*. There is also a reconstruction of a Le Corbusier-designed apartment.

PALAIS DE CHAILLOT



Théâtre National de Chaillot
Place du Trocadéro
Musée de la Marine
Musée de l'Homme
Cinéaqua
Cité de l'Architecture et du Patrimoine
Palais de Chaillot
Jardins du Trocadéro
Trocadéro Fountains
PL DU TROCADERO
AVE DU PRESIDENT WILSON
AVE ALBERT DE MUN
AVE DES NATIONS UNIES
AVE DE NEW YORK
PL J MARTI
AVE PAUL DOUMER
RUE FRANKLIN
PL DE VARSOVIE
PONT D'IENA
AVE DES NATIONS UNIES
BLVD DELESSERT
RUE LE NOTRE
AVE DE

sculptures, ornamental pools, and fountains. Steps lead down from the terrace to the **Théatre National de Chaillot**, which has an experimental approach to productions covering all genres.

The **Musée de l'Homme**, in the west wing, stages temporary exhibitions tracing human evolution through a series of anthropological exhibits. The museum is undergoing extensive renovation. Next door is the **Musée de la Marine**, devoted to French naval history and aspects of the modern-day navy. The east wing contains the Cité de l'Architecture et du Patrimoine *(see above)*.

Les Egouts ⑭

Opposite 93 quai d'Orsay 75007. **Map** 6 F2. ☎ *01 53 68 27 81 (in English).* M *Alma-Marceau.* ○ *11am–4pm (5pm in summer) Sat–Wed.* ● *last 3 wks Jan.* 🎫 ♿ 🛍

One of Baron Haussmann's finest achievements, the majority of Paris's sewers (*égouts*) date from the Second Empire. If laid end to end the 1,490 miles (2,400 km) of sewers would stretch from Paris to Istanbul. Tours of this popular attraction have been limited to a small area around the quai d'Orsay entrance and are now on foot. Visitors can discover the mysteries of underground Paris in the sewer museum here. There are also displays showing how the machinery used in the sewers has changed over the years.

Musée du Quai Branly ⑮

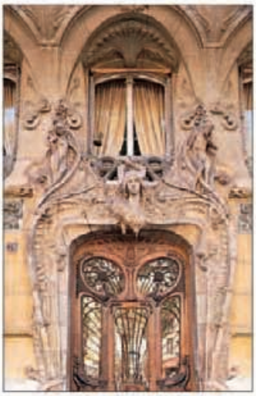
37 quai Branly. **Map** 6 E2. ***Tel*** *01 56 61 70 00.* M *Alma-Marceau.* RER *Pont-de-l'Alma.* ○ *11am–7pm Tue, Wed, Sun, 11am–9pm Thu, Fri, Sat.* 🎫 *free 1st Sun of month & for 18–25s after 6pm Sat.* 🍴 🛍 ***Exhibitions, theater, film, library.*** **www**.quaibranly.fr

Built to give the arts of Africa, Asia, Oceania, and the Americas a platform as shining as that for Western art in the city, this museum has a massive collection of more than 300,000 objects. It is particularly strong on Africa, with stone, wooden, and ivory masks, as well as ceremonial tools. The Jean Nouvel-designed building, which is raised on stilts, is a worthwhile sight in itself, while the ingenious use of glass in its construction allows the surrounding greenery to act as a natural backdrop.

Aztec mask, Musée du Quai Branly

Eiffel Tower ⑯

See p113.



Original Art Nouveau doorway at No. 29 avenue Rapp

No. 29 Avenue Rapp ⑰

75005. **Map** 6 E2. M *Pont-de-l'Alma.*

A prime example of Art Nouveau architecture, No. 29 avenue Rapp won its designer, Jules Lavirotte, first prize at the Concours des Façades de la Ville de Paris in 1901. Its ceramics and brickwork are decorated with animal and flower motifs intermingling with female figures. These are superimposed on a multicolored sandstone base to produce a façade that is deliberately erotic, and was certainly subversive in its day. Also worth visiting nearby is Lavirotte's building, complete with watchtower, which can be found in the square Rapp.

Champ-de-Mars ⑱

75007. **Map** 6 E3. M *Ecole-Militaire.* RER *Champ-de-Mars–Tour-Eiffel.*

The vast gardens stretching from the Eiffel Tower to the Ecole Militaire (Military School) were originally a parade ground for young officer cadets. The area has since been used for horse-racing, balloon ascents, and mass ceremonies to celebrate the anniversary of the Revolution on July 14th. The first ceremony was held in 1790 in the presence of a glum captive, Louis XVI.

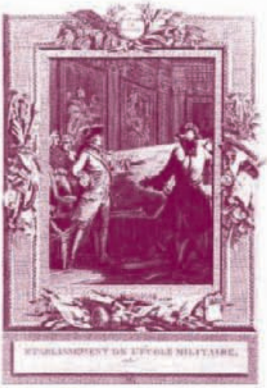
Mammoth exhibitions were held here in the late 19th century, among them the 1889 World Fair for which the Eiffel Tower was erected.

Ecole Militaire ⑲

1 pl Joffre 75007. **Map** 6 F4. M *Ecole-Militaire.* ***Visits*** *by special permission only – contact the Commandant in writing.*

The Royal Military Academy of Louis XV was founded in 1751 to educate 500 sons of impoverished officers. Louis XV and Madame de Pompadour commissioned architect Jacques-Ange Gabriel to design a building that would rival Louis XIV's Hôtel des Invalides. Financing the building became a problem so a lottery was authorized and a tax was raised on playing-cards. One of the main features is the central pavilion – a magnificent example of the French Classical style, with ten Corinthian columns and a quadrangular dome. Four figures adorn the entablature frieze, symbolizing France, Victory, Force, and Peace.

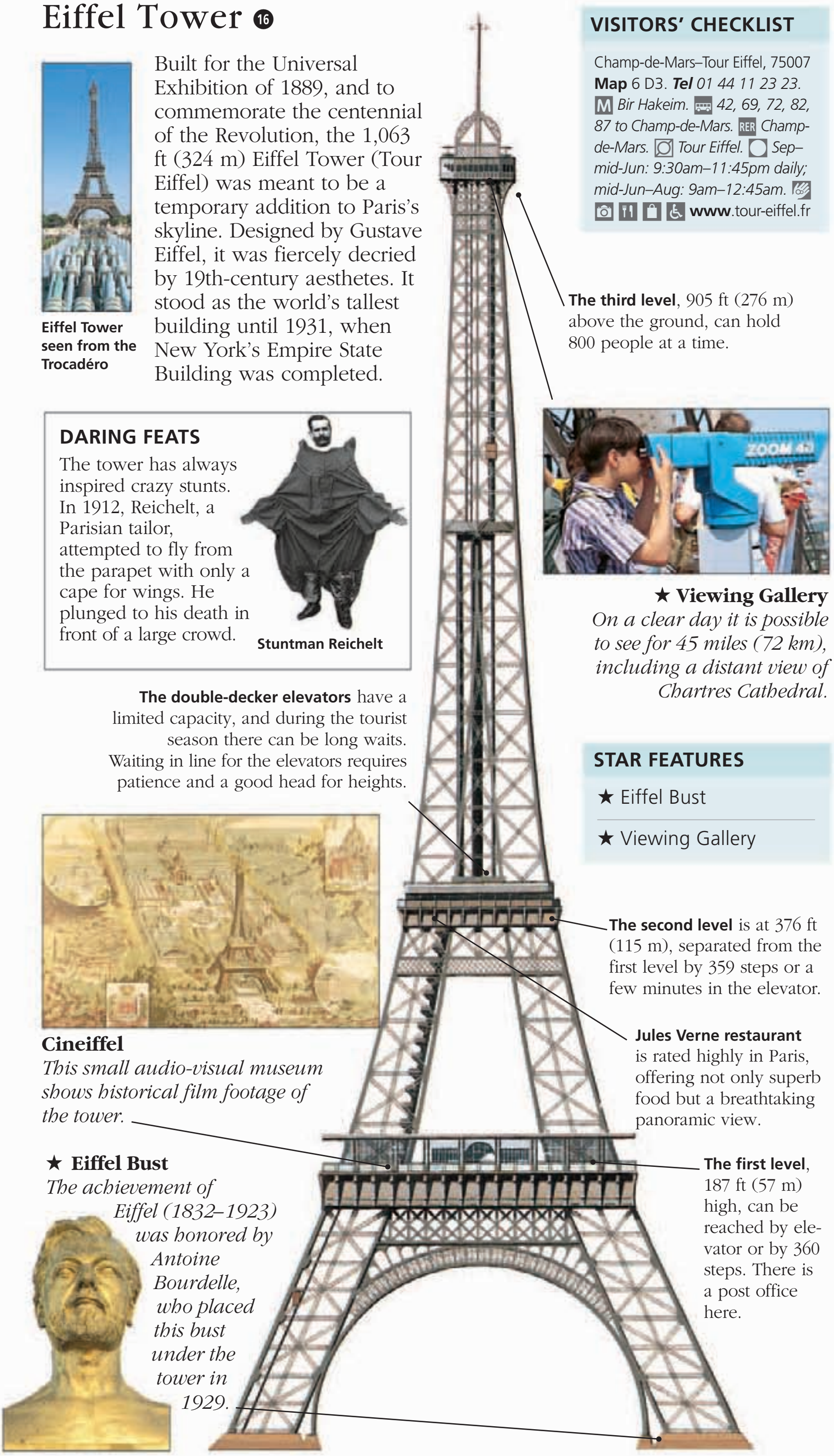
An early cadet at the academy was Napoleon, whose final report stated that "he could go far if the circumstances are right."


ETABLISSEMENT DE L'ECOLE MILITAIRE.

A 1751 engraving showing the planning of the Ecole Militaire

Eiffel Tower ⑯

Built for the Universal Exhibition of 1889, and to commemorate the centennial of the Revolution, the 1,063 ft (324 m) Eiffel Tower (Tour Eiffel) was meant to be a temporary addition to Paris's skyline. Designed by Gustave Eiffel, it was fiercely decried by 19th-century aesthetes. It stood as the world's tallest building until 1931, when New York's Empire State Building was completed.



Eiffel Tower seen from the Trocadéro

DARING FEATS

The tower has always inspired crazy stunts. In 1912, Reichelt, a Parisian tailor, attempted to fly from the parapet with only a cape for wings. He plunged to his death in front of a large crowd.

Stuntman Reichelt

The third level, 905 ft (276 m) above the ground, can hold 800 people at a time.

★ Viewing Gallery

On a clear day it is possible to see for 45 miles (72 km), including a distant view of Chartres Cathedral.

The double-decker elevators have a limited capacity, and during the tourist season there can be long waits. Waiting in line for the elevators requires patience and a good head for heights.

Cineiffel

This small audio-visual museum shows historical film footage of the tower.

The second level is at 376 ft (115 m), separated from the first level by 359 steps or a few minutes in the elevator.

Jules Verne restaurant is rated highly in Paris, offering not only superb food but a breathtaking panoramic view.

The first level, 187 ft (57 m) high, can be reached by elevator or by 360 steps. There is a post office here.

★ Eiffel Bust

The achievement of Eiffel (1832–1923) was honored by Antoine Bourdelle, who placed this bust under the tower in 1929.

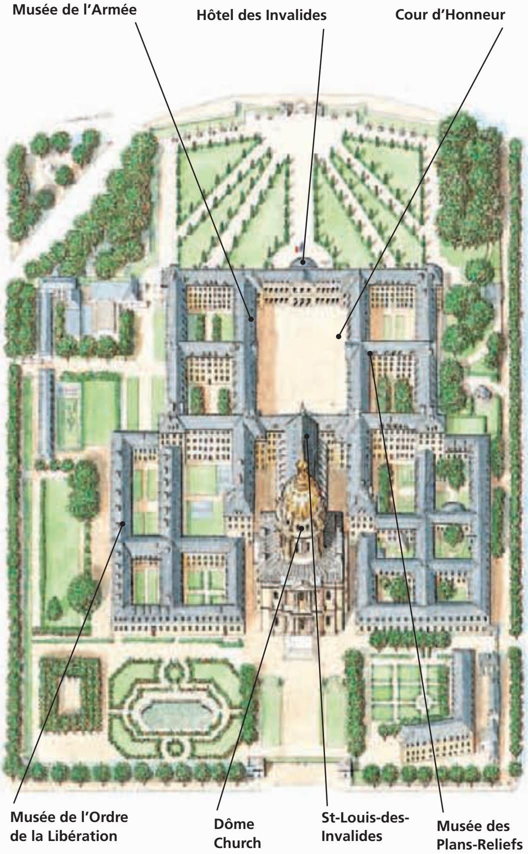
VISITORS' CHECKLIST

Champ-de-Mars–Tour Eiffel, 75007
Map 6 D3. ***Tel*** *01 44 11 23 23.*
M *Bir Hakeim.* 🚌 *42, 69, 72, 82, 87 to Champ-de-Mars.* RER *Champ-de-Mars.* ⛴ *Tour Eiffel.* ○ *Sep–mid-Jun: 9:30am–11:45pm daily; mid-Jun–Aug: 9am–12:45am.* ♿ 📷 🍴 🛍 ♿ **www**.tour-eiffel.fr

STAR FEATURES

- ★ Eiffel Bust
- ★ Viewing Gallery

LES INVALIDES



UNESCO ⑳

7 pl de Fontenoy 75007. **Map** 6 F5. ℹ *01 45 68 10 60 (in English).* **M** *Ségur, Cambronne.* ○ *for guided tours only: 3pm Mon (French), 3pm Wed (English).* ● *public hols.* ♿ ✋ 🍴 🛍 **www**.unesco.org

This is the headquarters of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). Its aim is to contribute to international peace through education, science, and culture.

UNESCO is a treasure-trove of modern art, including an enormous mural by Picasso, beautiful ceramics by Joan Miró and sculptures by Henry Moore. Outside, there is a peaceful Japanese garden by Noguchi. Exhibitions and movies are also held here.

Hôtel des Invalides ㉑

75007. **Map** 7 A3. ***Tel*** *01 44 42 38 77.* **M** *Latour-Maubourg, Invalides, Varenne.* ○ *10am–6pm (5pm winter) daily.* ● *Jan 1, May 1, Nov 1, Dec 25.* ✋ *(call to reserve on 01 44 42 37 72).* **www**.invalides.org

This imposing building, from which the area takes its name, was commissioned by Louis XIV in 1670 for his wounded and homeless veterans. Designed by Libéral Bruand, it was completed in 1676 by Jules Hardouin-Mansart. He later incorporated the Dôme Church, with its golden roof, which was built as Louis XIV's private chapel. Nearly 6,000 soldiers once lived here. Today there are fewer than 100.

The harmonious Classical façade is one of the most impressive sights in Paris. The building houses the Musée de l'Armée and the Musée de l'Ordre de la Libération. This was set up to honor feats of heroism during World War II under the leadership of Charles de Gaulle. The story is told using film, photographs, and mementos. The Musée des Plans-Reliefs also houses a large collection of military models of French forts.

Musée de l'Armée ㉒

Hôtel des Invalides 75007. **Map** 7 A3. ***Tel*** *08 10 11 33 99.* **M** *Varenne, Latour-Maubourg, Invalides.* ○ *10am– 6pm (5pm Oct–Mar) daily; some sections may be closed during renovations in 2009.* ● *1st Mon of month, Jan 1, May 1, Nov 1, Dec 25.* ✋ 📷 ♿ ✋ ☕ 🛍

This is one of the most comprehensive museums of military history in the world. It is housed in two galleries, situated on either side of the magnificent courtyard of the Hôtel des Invalides and in the newly opened "Priests' Wing" with the World War II galleries.

A major exhibit recalls the victories and defeats of France through history, dedicated mainly to the Napoleonic era. The emperor's death mask and stuffed horse, Vizier, are on display. Other exhibits include François I's ivory hunting horns, Oriental arms from Japan, and a model of the 1944 Normandy landing.

The façade of the Musée de l'Armée

Altar of St-Louis-des-Invalides with banners seized in battle

St-Louis-des-Invalides ㉓

Hôtel des Invalides 75007. **Map** 7 A3. Ⓜ *Invalides, Latour-Maubourg, Varenne.* ***Tel*** *01 44 42 37 65.* ○ *10am–5:30pm (4:30pm winter) daily.*

Also known as the "soldiers' church," this is the chapel of the Hôtel des Invalides. It was built from 1679 to 1708 by Jules Hardouin-Mansart, according to Bruand's design. The stark, Classical interior is well-proportioned, designed in the shape of a Greek cross.

There is a fine 17th-century organ, built by Alexandre Thierry, on which the first performance of Berlioz's *Requiem* was given on December 5, 1837, with more than 200 musicians and choristers participating.

Dôme Church ㉔

Hôtel des Invalides, 129 rue de Grenelle, 75007. **Map** 7 A3. ***Tel*** *01 44 42 38 77.* Ⓜ *Latour-Maubourg, Varenne, Invalides.* 🚌 *28, 63, 69, 80, 82, 83, 87, 92, 93 to Les Invalides.* RER *Invalides.* ⛴ *Tour Eiffel.* ○ *Oct–Mar: 10am–5pm; Apr–Sep: 10am–5pm daily (mid-Jun–mid-Sep: to 7pm).* ● *1st Mon of month, Jan 1, May 1, Jun 17, Nov 1, Dec 25.* 🎟 📷 ♿ *restr.* 🎧 🛒 🛍

Jules Hardouin-Mansart was asked in 1676 by the Sun King, Louis XIV, to build the Dôme Church to complement the existing buildings of the Invalides military refuge, designed by Libéral Bruand. The Dôme was to be reserved for the exclusive use of the Sun King and as the location of royal tombs.

The resulting masterpiece is one of the greatest examples of 17th-century French architecture, the period known as the *grand siècle*. After Louis XIV's death, plans to bury the royal family in the church were abandoned.

The main attraction is the tomb of Napoleon; 20 years after his death on the island of St. Helena, his body was returned to France and installed in this magnificent crypt, encased in six coffins in a vast red porphyry sarcophagus.

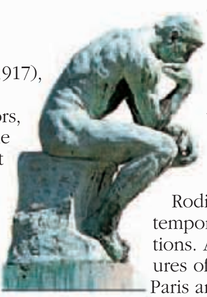
Dôme Church with cupola, first gilded in 1715

Musée Rodin ㉕

79 rue de Varenne 75007. **Map** 7 B3. ***Tel*** *01 44 18 61 10.* Ⓜ *Varenne.* ○ *9:30am–5:45pm (4:45pm winter) Tue–Sun; garden 1 hr later (5pm winter).* ● *Jan 1, May 1, Dec 25.* 🎟 ♿ *restricted.* 🛒 🛍 **www**.musee-rodin.fr

Auguste Rodin (1840–1917), regarded as one of the greatest French sculptors, lived and worked in the Hôtel Biron, an elegant 18th-century mansion, from 1908 until his death. In return for a state-owned apartment and studio, Rodin left his work to the nation, and it is now exhibited here. Some of his most celebrated sculptures are on display in the garden: *The Burghers of Calais, The Thinker, The Gates of Hell (see p120)*, and *Balzac*.

The indoor exhibits are arranged in chronological order, spanning the whole of Rodin's career. Highlights include *The Kiss* and *Eve*.



Rodin's *The Thinker* in museum garden

Sainte-Clotilde ㉖

12 rue de Martignac 75007. **Map** 7 B3. ☎ *01 44 18 62 60.* Ⓜ *Solférino, Varenne, Invalides.* ○ *9am–7:30pm Mon–Fri, 10am–8pm Sat, Sun.* ● *non-religious public hols.* ***Concerts***

Designed by the German-born architect Franz Christian Gau and built in 1846–56, this Neo-Gothic church was inspired by the 19th-century enthusiasm for the Middle Ages, popularized by such writers as Victor Hugo.

Inside are wall paintings by James Pradier and stained-glass windows with scenes relating to the patron saint of the church. The composer César Franck was organist here from 1858 to 1890.

Musée Maillol ㉗

61 rue de Grenelle 75007. **Map** 7 C4. ***Tel*** *01 42 22 59 58.* Ⓜ *Rue du Bac, Sèvres-Babylone.* ○ *11am–6pm Wed–Mon (last entry 5:15pm).* ● *publ hols.* ♿ 🛒 🛍 **www**.museemaillol.com

This museum was created by Dina Vierny, muse to Aristide Maillol. His work is here in all its forms: drawings, engravings, paintings, sculpture, and decorative objects. Also displayed is Dina Vierny's private collection of naïve art, works by Matisse, Dufy, Picasso, and Rodin, and top temporary exhibitions. Allegorical figures of the city of Paris and the four seasons adorn Bouchardon's fountain outside.

THE LEFT BANK

The Left Bank has long been associated with poets, philosophers, artists, and radical thinkers of all kinds. It still has its share of bohemian street life and sidewalk cafés, but the fashionable set has moved in, patronizing Yves St-Laurent and the exclusive interior design stores in rue Jacob.

The Latin Quarter is the ancient area lying between the Seine and Luxembourg Gardens, and is today filled with bookstores, art galleries, and cafés. The boulevard St-Michel, bordering the Latin quarter and St-Germain-des-Prés, has slowly given way to commerce, and is full of fast-food outlets and cheap stores. The surrounding maze of narrow, cobbled streets has retained its character, with ethnic stores and avant-garde theaters dominated by the façade of the Sorbonne, France's first university, built in 1253. Many Parisians dream of living near the Luxembourg Gardens, a quiet area with charming old streets, gateways, and elaborate gardens full of paths, lawns, and tree-lined avenues. Students come here to chat, and on warm days old men still meet underneath the chestnut trees to play chess or the traditional French game of *boules*.

Clock in the Musée d'Orsay

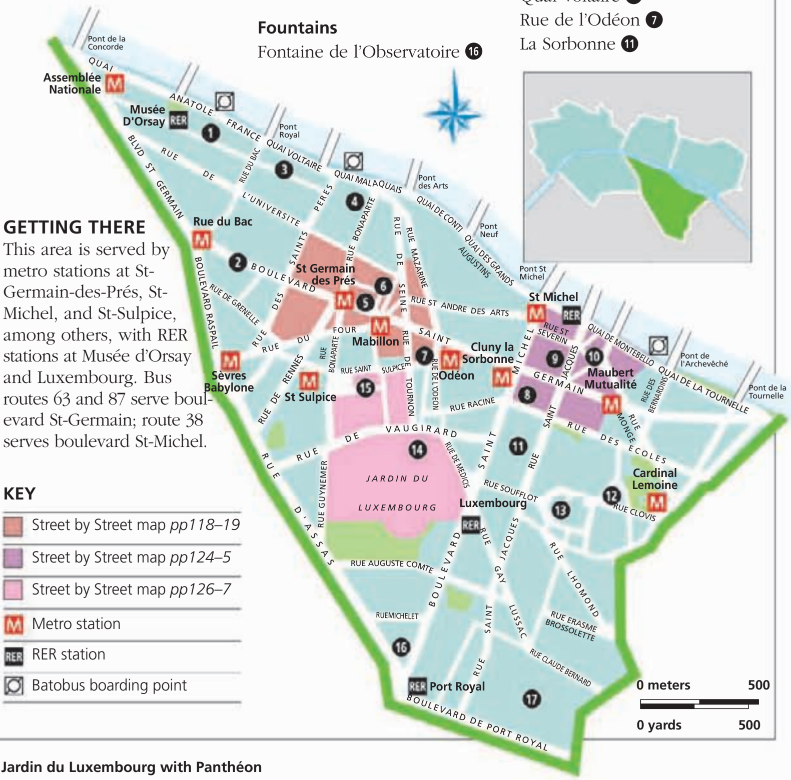
SIGHTS AT A GLANCE

Churches
Panthéon ⓭
St-Etienne-du-Mont ⑫
St-Germain-des-Prés ⑤
St-Julien-le-Pauvre ⑩
St-Séverin ⑨
St-Sulpice ⑮
Val-de-Grâce ⑰

Museums and Galleries
Musée de Cluny ⑧
Musée Eugène Delacroix ⑥
Musée d'Orsay pp120–1 ①

Fountains
Fontaine de l'Observatoire ⑯

Historic Buildings and Streets
Boulevard St-Germain ②
Ecole Nationale Supérieure des Beaux Arts ④
Palais du Luxembourg ⑭
Quai Voltaire ③
Rue de l'Odéon ⑦
La Sorbonne ⑪


Pont de la Concorde
QUAI ANATOLE FRANCE
Assemblée Nationale
Musée D'Orsay
RER
1
BLVD ST GERMAIN
RUE DE L'UNIVERSITE
Pont Royal
QUAI VOLTAIRE
RUE DU BAC
3
QUAI MALAQUAIS
Pont des Arts
4
RUE DES SAINTS PERES
RUE BONAPARTE
RUE DE SEINE
RUE MAZARINE
QUAI DE CONTI
Pont Neuf
QUAI DES GRANDS AUGUSTINS
Pont St Michel
Rue du Bac
2
BOULEVARD
BOULEVARD RASPAIL
RUE DE GRENELLE
St Germain des Prés
6
5
RUE ST ANDRE DES ARTS
St Michel
RER
RUE ST SEVERIN
QUAI DE MONTEBELLO
Pont de l'Archevêché
QUAI DE LA TOURNELLE
Pont de la Tournelle
RUE DU FOUR
Mabillon
SAINT
RUE BONAPARTE
RUE SAINT SULPICE
RUE DE TOURNON
RUE DE L'ODEON
7
Cluny la Sorbonne
Odéon
MICHEL
9
10
RUE ST JACQUES
GERMAIN
Maubert Mutualité
RUE DES BERNARDINS
8
Sèvres Babylone
RUE DE RENNES
St Sulpice
15
RUE RACINE
RUE DES ECOLES
RUE MONGE
RUE DE VAUGIRARD
14
11
SAINT
RUE
RUE D'ASSAS
RUE GUYNEMER
RUE DE MEDICIS
JARDIN DU LUXEMBOURG
RUE SOUFFLOT
Luxembourg
RER
12
13
Cardinal Lemoine
RUE CLOVIS
RUE AUGUSTE COMTE
BOULEVARD
RUE GAY LUSSAC
RUE ST JACQUES
RUE LHOMOND
RUE ERASME BROSSOLETTE
RUEMICHELET
16
RUE SAINT
RUE CLAUDE BERNARD
RER Port Royal
17
BOULEVARD DE PORT ROYAL
0 meters 500
0 yards 500

GETTING THERE

This area is served by metro stations at St-Germain-des-Prés, St-Michel, and St-Sulpice, among others, with RER stations at Musée d'Orsay and Luxembourg. Bus routes 63 and 87 serve boulevard St-Germain; route 38 serves boulevard St-Michel.

KEY

- 🟥 Street by Street map *pp118–19*
- 🟪 Street by Street map *pp124–5*
- 🟪 Street by Street map *pp126–7*
- Ⓜ Metro station
- RER RER station
- ◎ Batobus boarding point

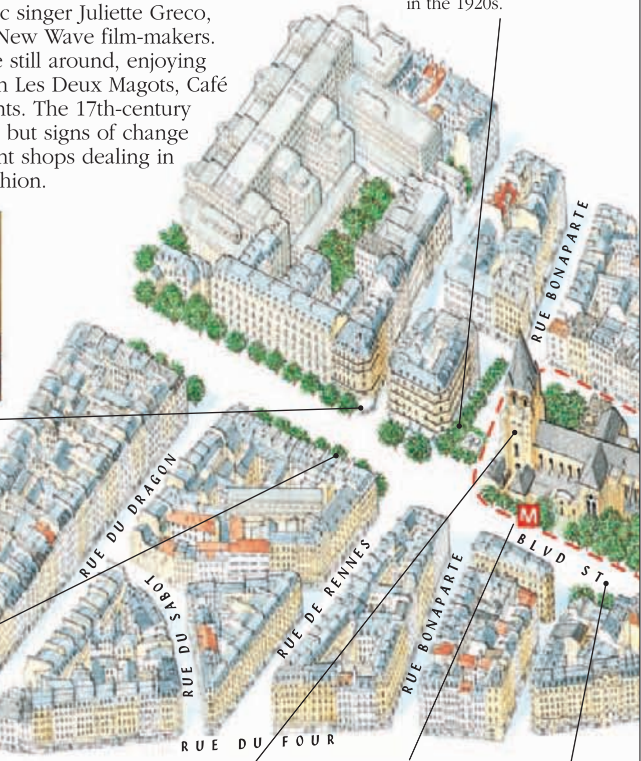
◁ **Jardin du Luxembourg with Panthéon**

Street by Street: St-Germain-des-Prés

Organ grinder in St-Germain

After World War II, St-Germain des-Prés became synonymous with intellectual life centered on bars and cafés. Philosophers, writers, actors, and musicians mingled in the cellar nightspots and brasseries, where existentialist philosophy co-existed with American jazz. The area is now more stylish than in the heyday of Jean-Paul Sartre and Simone de Beauvoir, the enigmatic singer Juliette Greco, and the New Wave film-makers. However, the writers are still around, enjoying the pleasures of sitting in Les Deux Magots, Café de Flore, and other haunts. The 17th-century buildings have survived, but signs of change are evident in the affluent shops dealing in antiques, books, and fashion.

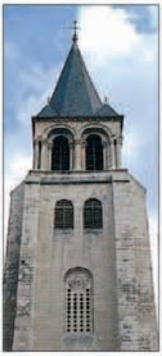
Les Deux Magots became a focus of bohemian and literary activity in the 1920s.



Café de Flore, the former favorite haunt of Jean-Paul Sartre, Simone de Beauvoir, and other French intellectuals, still has a classic Art Deco interior.

Brasserie Lipp, decorated with colorful ceramics, is a renowned brasserie frequented by politicians.

Metro St-Germain-des-Prés



★ St-Germain-des-Prés

The philosopher René Descartes is among the notables buried here in Paris's oldest church ❺

★ Boulevard St-Germain

Café terraces, boutiques, movie theaters, restaurants, and bookstores characterize the central section of the Left Bank's main street ❷

STAR SIGHTS

- ★ St-Germain-des-Prés
- ★ Boulevard St-Germain
- ★ Musée Delacroix

KEY

– – – Suggested route

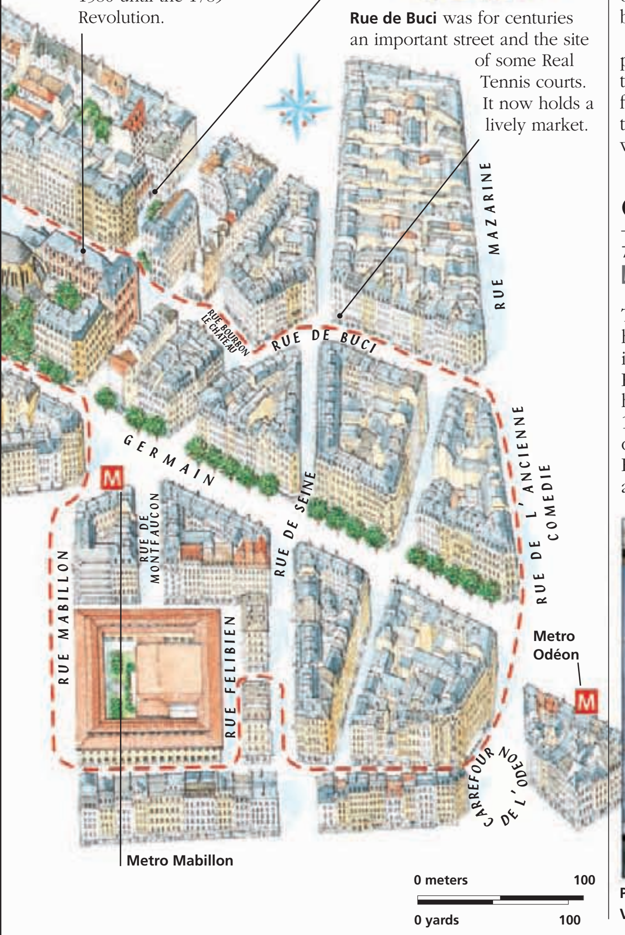
TUILERIES
Seine
ILE DE LA CITE, MARAIS AND BEAUBOURG
INVALIDES
THE LEFT BANK

LOCATOR MAP
See Street Finder maps 7, 8

★ Musée Delacroix
The home of the Romantic painter Eugène Delacroix (1798–1863) is now a museum devoted to his art ⑥

Palais Abbatial was the residence of abbots from 1586 until the 1789 Revolution.

Rue de Buci was for centuries an important street and the site of some Real Tennis courts. It now holds a lively market.


RUE MAZARINE
RUE BOURBON LE CHATEAU
RUE DE BUCI
GERMAIN
RUE DE SEINE
RUE DE L'ANCIENNE COMEDIE
RUE DE MONTFAUCON
RUE MABILLON
RUE FELIBIEN
CARREFOUR DE L'ODEON
0 meters 100
0 yards 100

Metro Odéon

Metro Mabillon

Musée d'Orsay ①

See pp120–1.

Boulevard St-Germain ②

75006, 75007. **Map** 8 D4. M *Solférino, Rue du Bac, St-Germain-des-Prés, Mabillon, Odéon.*

The Left Bank's most celebrated thoroughfare curves across three districts from the Ile St-Louis to the Pont de la Concorde. The architecture is homogeneous because the boulevard was another of Baron Haussmann's bold strokes of 19th-century urban planning, but it encompasses a wide range of different lifestyles from bohemian to bourgeois.

Starting from the east, it passes Musée de Cluny and the Sorbonne. It is most lively from boulevard St-Michel to St-Germain-des-Prés, with its café culture.

Quai Voltaire ③

75006, 75007. **Map** 8 D3.
M *Rue du Bac.*

The quai Voltaire is now home to some of the most important antiques dealers in Paris. Many famous people have lived in the attractive 18th-century houses, among others Voltaire at No. 27 and Richard Wagner, Jean Sibelius, and Oscar Wilde at No. 19.

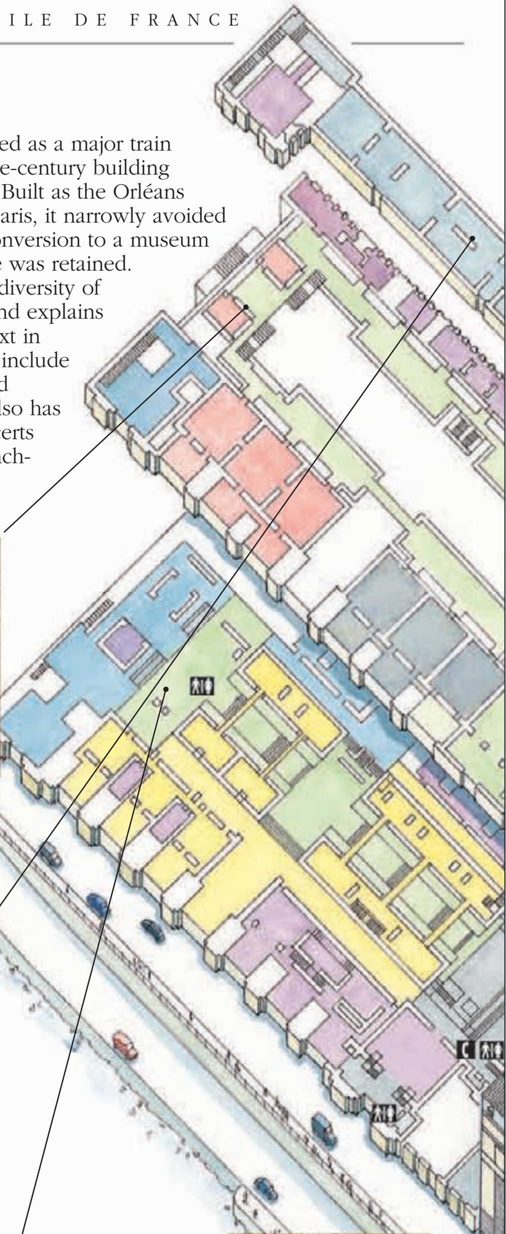
Plaque marking the house in quai Voltaire where Voltaire died in 1778

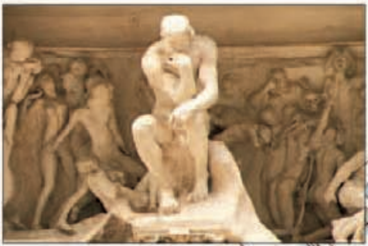
Musée d'Orsay ❶

Young Dancer of Fourteen **(1881) by Edgar Degas**

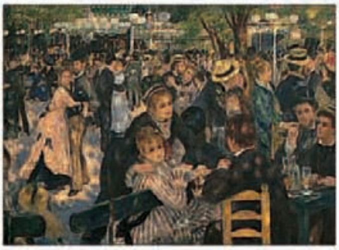
In 1986, 47 years after it had closed as a major train station, Victor Laloux's turn-of-the-century building reopened as the Musée d'Orsay. Built as the Orléans railroad terminus in the heart of Paris, it narrowly avoided demolition in the 1970s. In the conversion to a museum much of the original architecture was retained.

The museum presents the rich diversity of visual arts from 1848 to 1914 and explains the social and technological context in which they were created. Exhibits include paintings, sculptures, furniture, and decorative objects. The museum also has a program of classical music concerts that take place some lunchtimes and evenings in the auditorium.

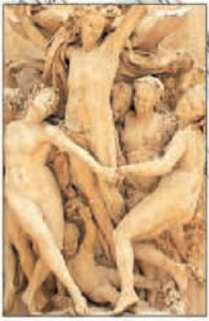




The Gates of Hell *(1880–1917)*
Rodin included figures that he had already created, such as The Thinker *and* The Kiss, *in this famous gateway.*



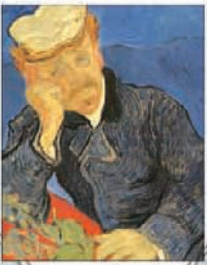
Dancing at the Moulin de la Galette *(1876)*
Renoir painted this picture outside to capture the light as it filtered through the trees.



The Dance *(1867–8)*
Carpeaux's dynamic sculpture caused a scandal when it was first unveiled in 1869.

KEY TO FLOOR PLAN

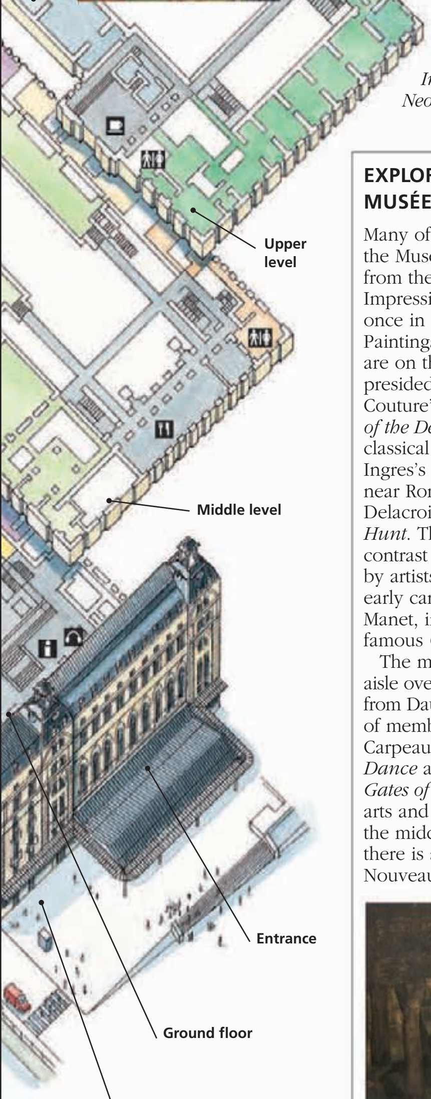
- 🟦 Architecture & Decorative Arts
- 🟩 Sculpture
- 🟨 Painting before 1870
- 🟦 Impressionism
- 🟩 Neo-Impressionism
- ⬜ Naturalism and Symbolism
- 🟥 Art Nouveau
- 🟪 Temporary exhibitions
- ⬛ Nonexhibition space



Doctor Paul Gachet *(1890)*
This portrait by Van Gogh is one of three and was painted the same year the artist died.

GALLERY GUIDE

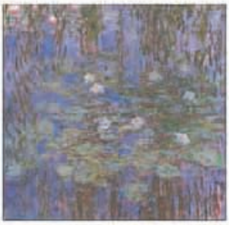
The ground floor has works from the mid- to late 19th century. The middle level features Art Nouveau decorative art and late 19th- to early 20th-century paintings and sculptures. The upper level has Impressionist and Neo-Impressionist art.



VISITORS' CHECKLIST

Quai Anatole France, 75007.
Map 8 D2. ***Tel*** *01 40 49 48 14.*
M Solférino. 🚌 24, 68, 69, 84 to quai A. France; 73 to rue de la Légion d'Honneur; 63, 83, 84, 94 to bd St-Germain. RER Musée d'Orsay. P Quai A. France.
○ 9:30am–6pm Tue–Sun (9:45pm Thu; last entry 1 hr before closing).
● Jan 1, May 1, Dec 25.
♿
Concerts *phone 01 40 49 47 50.*
www.musee-orsay.fr

EXPLORING THE MUSÉE D'ORSAY

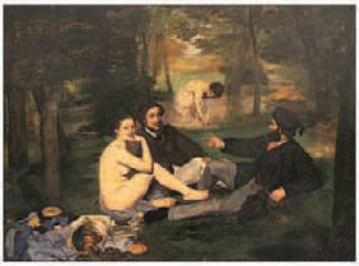


Blue Waterlilies **(1919) by Claude Monet**

Many of the paintings in the Musée d'Orsay came from the Louvre and the Impressionist collection once in the Jeu de Paume. Paintings from before 1870 are on the ground floor, presided over by Thomas Couture's massive *Romans of the Decadence*. Neo-classical masterpieces, like Ingres's *La Source*, hang near Romantic works like Delacroix's turbulent *Tiger Hunt*. These exotic visions contrast with Realist works by artists like Courbet and early canvases by Degas and Manet, including the latter's famous *Olympia*.

The museum's central aisle overflows with sculpture, from Daumier's satirical busts of members of parliament to Carpeaux's exuberant *The Dance* and Rodin's *The Gates of Hell*. Decorative arts and architecture are on the middle level, where there is also a display of Art Nouveau – sinuous lines characterize Lalique's jewelry and glassware and the designs of Hector Guimard, who produced the characteristic curvy entrances of the Paris metro.

Among the many highlights of the Impressionist rooms on the upper level are Monet's *Rouen Cathedral* series *(see p267)* and Renoir's joyful *Moulin de la Galette*. The Post-Impressionist collection includes the *Eglise d'Auvers* by Van Gogh and works by Cézanne, Seurat's pointillist compositions such as *Le Cirque*, Gauguin's highly colored Symbolist works, Toulouse-Lautrec's depictions of Parisian women and nightlife, and Rousseau's charmingly naive dream world. Among the highlights of the post-1900 display is Matisse's *Luxe, Calme et Volupté*.



Le Déjeuner sur l'Herbe **(1863) by Edouard Manet**

The façade of the Ecole Nationale Supérieure des Beaux Arts

Ecole Nationale Supérieure des Beaux Arts ❹

14 rue Bonaparte 75006. **Map** 8 E3. ***Tel*** *01 47 03 50 00.* M *St-Germain-des-Prés.* ○ *groups by appt only (01 47 03 50 00 to reserve).* ♿ ☕ ***Library*** **www**.ensba.fr

The main French school of fine arts has an enviable position at the corner of the rue Bonaparte and the riverside quai Malaquais. It is housed in several buildings, the most imposing being the 19th-century Palais des Etudes. A host of budding French and foreign painters and architects have crossed the courtyard, which contains a 17th-century chapel, to learn in the ateliers of the school. Many American architects have studied here over the past century.

St-Germain-des-Prés ❺

3 pl St-Germain-des-Prés 75006. **Map** 8 E4. ***Tel*** *01 55 42 81 33.* M *St-Germain-des-Prés.* ○ *8am–7pm daily.* ***Concerts*** *8pm Tue, Thu.*

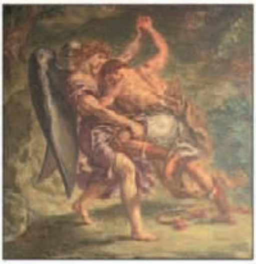
This is the oldest church in Paris, originating in 542 as a basilica to house holy relics. It became an immensely powerful Benedictine abbey, rebuilt in the 11th century, but most of it was destroyed by fire in 1794. Major restoration took place in the 19th century. One of the three original towers survives, housing one of the oldest belfries in France. The interior of the church is an interesting mix of architectural styles, with 6th-century marble columns, Gothic vaulting, and Romanesque arches. Famous tombs include that of 17th-century philosopher René Descartes.

Musée Eugène Delacroix ❻

6 rue de Fürstenberg 75006. **Map** 8 E4. ***Tel*** *01 44 41 86 50.* M *St-Germain-des-Prés.* ○ *9.30am–5pm Wed–Mon.* ● *Jan 1, May 1, Dec 25.* ♿ 📷 🛍 **www**.musee-delacroix.fr

The leading nonconformist Romantic painter Eugène Delacroix lived and worked here from 1857 until his death in 1863. Here he painted *The Entombment of Christ* and *The Way to Calvary* (which now hang in the museum). He also created superb murals for the Chapel of the Holy Angels in the nearby St-Sulpice church.

The apartment and garden studio has a portrait of George Sand, Delacroix self-portraits, and sketches.



Jacob Wrestling with the Angel* by Delacroix, in St-Sulpice *(see p127)

Rue de l'Odéon ❼

75006. **Map** 8 F5. M *Odéon.*

Opened in 1779 to improve access to the Odéon theater, this was the first street in Paris to have sidewalks with gutters and it still has many 18th-century houses.

Sylvia Beach's bookstore, the original Shakespeare & Company, stood at No. 12 from 1921 to 1940. It was a magnet for writers like James Joyce, Ezra Pound, and Hemingway.

Musée de Cluny ❽

6 pl Paul-Painlevé. **Map** 9 A5. ***Tel*** *01 53 73 78 16.* M *St-Michel, Odéon, Cluny.* RER *St-Michel.* ○ *9:15am– 5:45pm Wed–Mon.* ● *1 Jan, 1 May, 25 Dec.* ♿ 📷 🛍 ***Concerts****.* **www**.musee-moyenage.fr

The museum (officially the Musée National du Moyen Age) is a unique combination

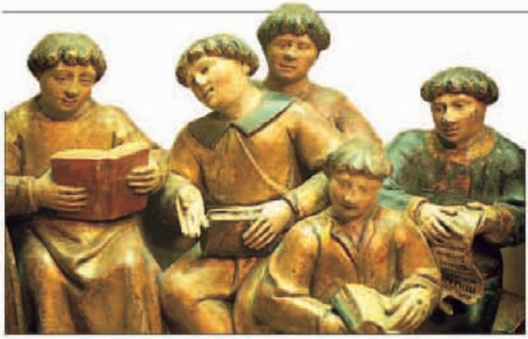
Stone heads of the Kings of Judah carved around 1220

St-Séverin ❾

1 rue-des-Prêtres-St-Séverin 75005. **Map** 9 A4. ***Tel*** *01 42 34 93 50.* M *St-Michel.* ○ *11am–7:30pm daily.* ♿

St-Séverin, one of the most beautiful churches in Paris, is named after a 6th-century hermit who lived in the area. It is a perfect example of the Flamboyant Gothic style. Construction finished in the early 16th century and included a remarkable double aisle encircling the chancel. In the garden stands the church's medieval gable-roofed charnel house.

Gargoyles adorning the gables of the Flamboyant Gothic St-Séverin

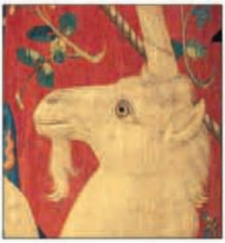


The School woodcarving (English, early 16th century)

of Gallo-Roman ruins, incorporated into a medieval mansion (in newly created medieval gardens), and one of the world's finest collections of medieval art and crafts. Its name comes from Pierre de Chalus, Abbot of Cluny, who bought the ruins in 1330. The present building dates from 1485–98. Among the star exhibits are the tapestries, remarkable for their quality, age and state of preservation. The highlight of the sculpture section is the Gallery of the Kings, while one of Cluny's most precious items, the Golden Rose of Basel from 1330, is found in the collection of jewelry and metalwork. Other treasures include stained glass, woodcarvings, and books of hours.

LADY WITH THE UNICORN TAPESTRIES

These six outstanding tapestries are fine examples of the millefleurs style. Developed in the 15th and early 16th centuries, the style is noted for its graceful depiction of animals and people and its fresh and harmonious colors.



The poetic elegance of a unicorn on the sixth tapestry

St-Julien-le-Pauvre ⑩

1 rue St-Julien-le-Pauvre 75005. **Map** 9 A4. ***Tel*** *01 43 54 52 16.* M *St-Michel.* ○ *9:30am–1:30pm, 3–6pm daily.* ✝ *12:15pm Tue–Sat.* ***Concerts***

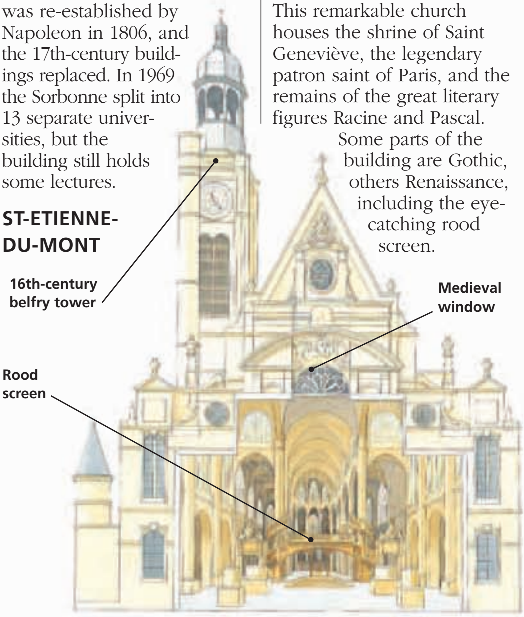
The church is one of the oldest in Paris, dating from between 1165 and 1220. The university held its official meetings in the church until 1524, when a student protest created so much damage that university meetings were barred from the church by parliament. It has belonged to the Melchite sect of the Greek Orthodox Church since 1889, and is now the setting for classical and religious concerts.

La Sorbonne ⑪

47 rue des Ecoles 75005. **Map** 9 A5. ***Tel*** *01 40 46 22 11.* M *Cluny-La Sorbonne, Maubert-Mutualité.* ✓ *only by appt. Write to Service des Visites.*

The Sorbonne, seat of the University of Paris until 1969, was established in 1253 by Robert de Sorbon, confessor to Louis IX, for 16 poor scholars to study theology. From these modest origins, the college became the center of scholastic theology. In 1469, three printing machines were brought from Mainz, and the first printing house in France was founded. The college's opposition to liberal 18th-century philosophical ideas led to its suppression during the Revolution. It was re-established by Napoleon in 1806, and the 17th-century buildings replaced. In 1969 the Sorbonne split into 13 separate universities, but the building still holds some lectures.

ST-ETIENNE-DU-MONT



St-Etienne-du-Mont ⑫

Pl Ste-Geneviève 75005. **Map** 13 A1. ***Tel*** *01 43 54 11 79.* M *Cardinal Lemoine.* ○ *noon–7:30pm Mon, 8:45am–7:30pm Tue–Sun (closed lunchtime Sat & Sun).* ● *Mon in Jul–Aug.* 📷 🔒

This remarkable church houses the shrine of Saint Geneviève, the legendary patron saint of Paris, and the remains of the great literary figures Racine and Pascal. Some parts of the building are Gothic, others Renaissance, including the eye-catching rood screen.

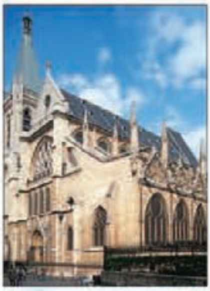
Street by Street: Latin Quarter

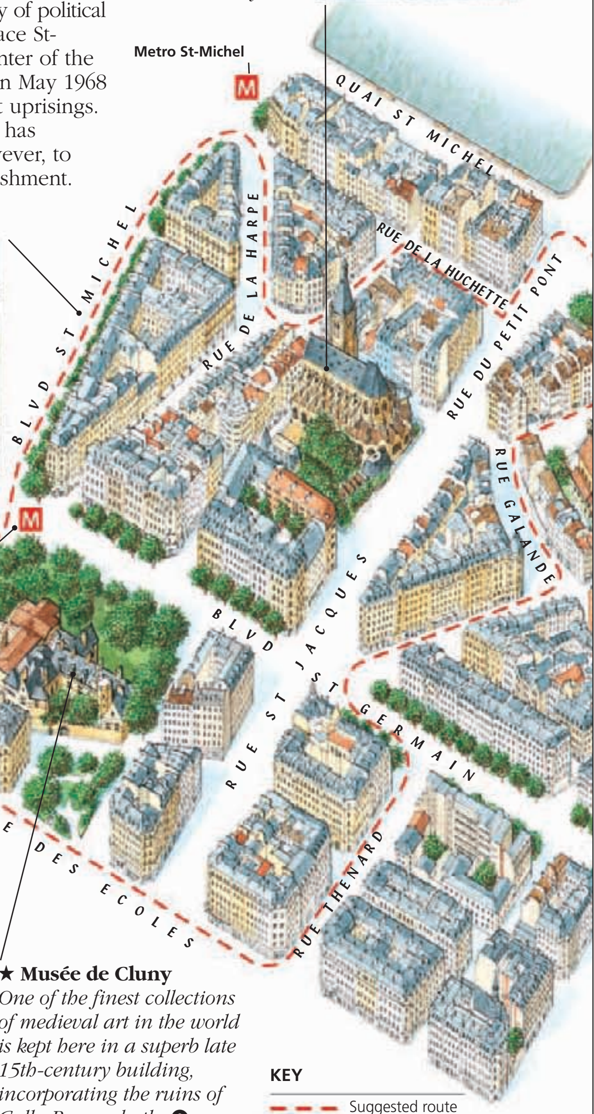
Latin jazz

Since the Middle Ages this riverside quarter has been dominated by the Sorbonne, and acquired its name from the early Latin-speaking students. It dates back to the Roman town across from the Ile de la Cité; at that time the rue St-Jacques was one of the main roads out of Paris. The area is generally associated with artists, intellectuals, and a bohemian way of life; it also has a history of political unrest. In 1871, the place St-Michel became the center of the Paris Commune, and in May 1968 it was a site of student uprisings. Today the eastern half has become sufficiently chic, however, to house members of the Establishment.

★ St-Séverin

Begun in the 13th century, this church took three centuries to build and is a fine example of the Flamboyant Gothic style ❾




Metro St-Michel
M
QUAI ST MICHEL
RUE DE LA HUCHETTE
RUE DU PETIT PONT
RUE DE LA HARPE
BLVD ST MICHEL
RUE GALANDE
M
BLVD ST GERMAIN
RUE ST JACQUES
RUE DES ECOLES
RUE THENARD
Metro Cluny La Sorbonne
0 meters 100
0 yards 100

Boulevard St-Michel, or Boul'Mich as it is affectionately known by locals, is a lively mélange of cafés, book, and clothes stores, with night-clubs and experimental movie theaters nearby.

★ Musée de Cluny

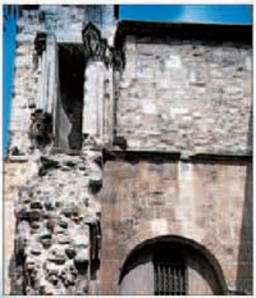
One of the finest collections of medieval art in the world is kept here in a superb late 15th-century building, incorporating the ruins of Gallo-Roman baths ❽

KEY

- - - Suggested route

TUILERIES
Seine
ILE DE LA CITE, MARAIS AND BEAUBOURG
INVALIDES
THE LEFT BANK

LOCATOR MAP
See Street Finder maps 8, 9, 12, 13



★ St-Julien-le-Pauvre
Rebuilt in the 17th century, this church was used to store animal feed in the Revolution ⑩

PETIT PONT
QUAI DE MONTEBELLO
PONT AU DOUBLE
RUE LAGRANGE
M

Metro Maubert Mutualité

STAR SIGHTS

- ★ Musée de Cluny
- ★ St-Séverin
- ★ St-Julien-le-Pauvre

Panthéon ⑬

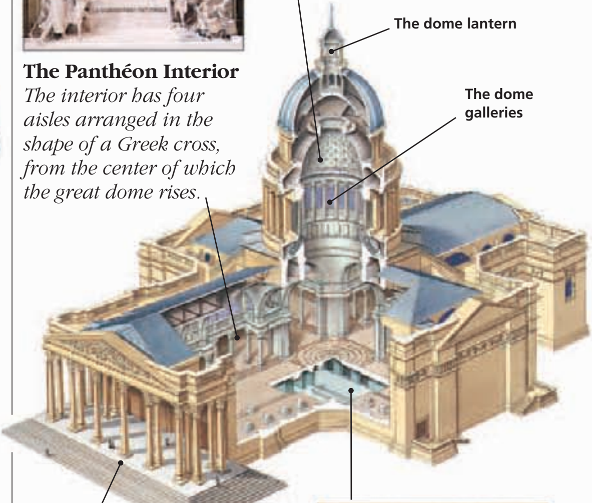
Pl du Panthéon 75005. **Map** 13 A1. ***Tel*** *01 44 32 18 00.* M *Maubert-Mutualité, Cardinal-Lemoine.* RER *Luxembourg.* ○ *Apr–Sep: 10am–6:30pm daily; Oct–Mar: 10am–6pm daily.* ● *Jan 1, May 1, Dec 25.* **http://**.pantheon.monuments-nationaux.fr

When Louis XV recovered from illness in 1744, he was so grateful that he conceived a magnificent church to honor Saint Geneviève, the patron saint of Paris. The French architect Jacques-Germain Soufflot planned the church in Neoclassical style. Work began in 1764 and was completed in 1790 under the control of Guillaume Rondelet. But with the Revolution underway, the church was soon turned into a pantheon – a monument housing the tombs of France's great heroes. Napoleon returned it to the Church in 1806, but it was secularized and then desecularized once more before finally being made a civic building in 1885.

The façade, inspired by the Rome Pantheon, has a pediment relief depicting the mother country granting laurels to her great men. Those resting here include Voltaire, Rousseau, and Zola, and the ashes of Pierre and Marie Curie, and André Malraux.

The Panthéon Interior
The interior has four aisles arranged in the shape of a Greek cross, from the center of which the great dome rises.

Iron-Framed Dome
The fresco in the dome's stone cupola represents the Glorification of Sainte Geneviève, *commissioned by Napoleon in 1811.*



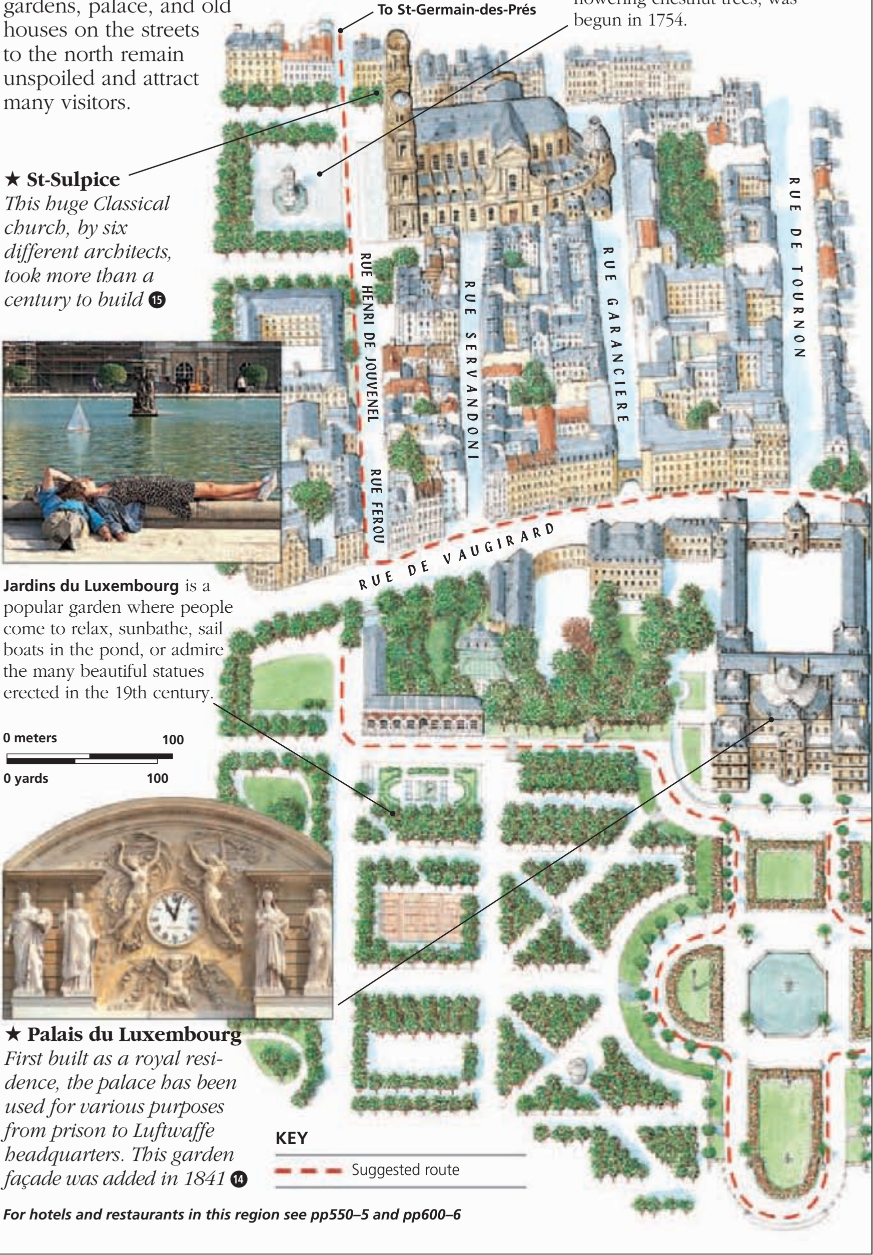
Crypt
Under the building, the vast crypt divides into galleries flanked by Doric columns. Many French notables rest here, including Voltaire and Emile Zola.

Street by Street: Luxembourg Quarter

Situated only a few steps from the bustle of St-Germain-des-Prés, this graceful and historic area offers a peaceful haven in the heart of a modern city. The Jardin du Luxembourg and Palais du Luxembourg dominate the surroundings. The gardens became fully open to the public in the 19th century under the ownership of the Comte de Provence (later to become Louis XVIII), when for a small fee visitors could come in and feast on fruit from the orchard. Today the gardens, palace, and old houses on the streets to the north remain unspoiled and attract many visitors.

STAR SIGHTS

- ★ St-Sulpice
- ★ Palais du Luxembourg



Place St-Sulpice, ringed by flowering chestnut trees, was begun in 1754.

★ St-Sulpice
This huge Classical church, by six different architects, took more than a century to build ⑮

Jardins du Luxembourg is a popular garden where people come to relax, sunbathe, sail boats in the pond, or admire the many beautiful statues erected in the 19th century.

0 meters 100

0 yards 100

★ Palais du Luxembourg
First built as a royal residence, the palace has been used for various purposes from prison to Luftwaffe headquarters. This garden façade was added in 1841 ⑭

KEY

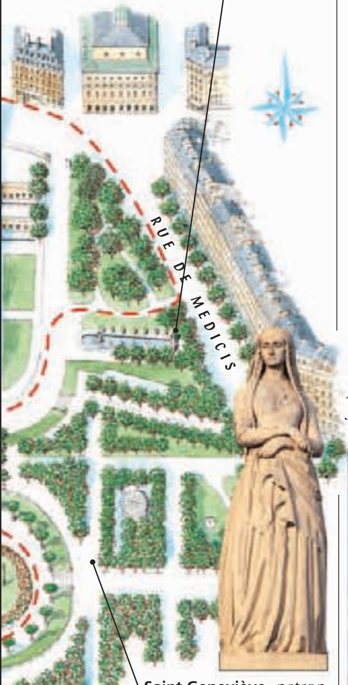
▬ ▬ ▬	Suggested route

For hotels and restaurants in this region see pp550–5 and pp600–6

OPERA
ILE DE LA CITE, MARAIS AND BEAUBOURG
Seine
INVALIDES
THE LEFT BANK

LOCATOR MAP
See Street Finder maps 8, 12, 13

Fontaine de Médicis is a 17th-century fountain in the style of an Italian grotto. It is thought to have been designed by Salomon de Brosse.



Saint Geneviève, patron saint of Paris, whose prayers saved Paris from the Huns in AD 451, is honored by this statue by Michel-Louis Victor in 1845.

Palais du Luxembourg ⓮

15 rue de Vaugirard 75006. **Map** 8 E5. ***Tel*** *01 44 54 19 49.* M *Odéon.* RER *Luxembourg.* ☞ *groups: Mon, Fri, Sat (apply 3 months in advance); individuals: one Sat per month.* ***Tel*** *01 44 54 19 49.* 🚫 **www**.senat.fr ***Museum*** ○ *daily during exhibitions.* ▨ **www**.museeduluxembourg.fr

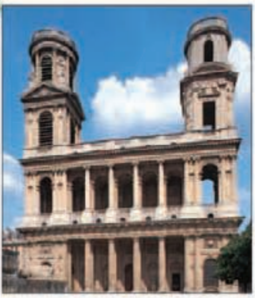
Now the home of the French Senate, this palace was built to remind Marie de' Médici, widow of Henri IV, of her native Florence. It was designed by Salomon de Brosse in the style of Florence's Pitti Palace. By the time it was finished (1631) she had been banished from Paris, but it remained a royal palace until the Revolution. In World War II it became the Luftwaffe headquarters. The Musée du Luxembourg in the east gallery hosts world-class art exhibitions.

St-Sulpice ⓯

Pl St-Sulpice 75006. **Map** 8 E5. ***Tel*** *01 42 34 59 98.* M *St-Sulpice.* ○ *7:30am–7:30pm daily.* 📷 ***Concerts***

This huge and imposing church was started in 1646 and took more than a century to finish. The result is a simple façade with two tiers of elegant columns and two mismatched towers at the ends. Large arched windows fill the vast interior with light.

In the side chapel to the right are murals by Eugène Delacroix, including *Jacob Wrestling with the Angel (see p122)* and *Heliodorus Driven from the Temple.*



The Classical two-story west front of St-Sulpice with its two towers

Carpeaux's fountain sculpture

Fontaine de l'Observatoire ⓰

Pl Ernest Denis, av de l'Observatoire 7500. **Map** 12 E2. RER *Port Royal.*

Situated at the southern tip of the Jardin du Luxembourg, this is one of the finest fountains in Paris. The central sculpture, by Jean-Baptiste Carpeaux, was erected in 1873. Made of bronze, it has four women holding aloft a globe representing six continents – the seventh, Australia, was left out for reasons of symmetry. There are some subsidiary figures, including dolphins, horses, and a turtle.

Val-de-Grâce ⓱

1 pl Alphonse-Laveran 75005. **Map** 12 F2. ***Tel*** *01 40 51 51 92.* M *Gobelins.* RER *Port Royal.* ○ *noon–6pm Tue, Wed, Sat, Sun.* ● *Aug.* ☞ ▨ *except for nave.* ♿

This is one of the most beautiful churches in France, and forms part of a military hospital complex. Built for Anne of Austria (wife of Louis XIII) in gratitude for the birth of her son, young Louis XIV himself laid the first stone in 1645.

The church is noted for its dome. In the cupola is Pierre Mignard's enormous fresco, with over 200 triple-life-sized figures. The six huge marble columns framing the altar are similar to St. Peter's in Rome.

ERIE
X ARTS

FARTHER AFIELD

Many of Paris's famous sights are slightly out of the city center. Montmartre, long a mecca for artists and writers, still retains much of its bohemian atmosphere, and Montparnasse is full of bustling cafés and theater crowds. The famous Cimetière du Père Lachaise numbers Chopin, Oscar Wilde, and Jim Morrison among its dead, and, along with the parks and gardens, provides a tranquil escape from sightseeing. Modern architecture can be seen at Fondation Le Corbusier and La Défense, and there is a huge selection of museums to visit. To the northeast, the science museum at La Villette provides an educational family day out.

SIGHTS AT A GLANCE

Museums and Galleries

- Musée Marmottan Claude Monet ⑤
- Musée du Cristal de Baccarat ⑥
- Musée Gustave Moreau ⑨
- Cité Nationale de l'Histoire de l'Immigration ⑳
- Musée National d'Histoire Naturelle ㉔

Churches and Mosques

- St-Alexandre-Nevsky ⑦
- Sacré-Coeur ⑪
- Mosquée de Paris ㉗

Parks and Gardens

- Bois de Boulogne ②
- Parc Monceau ⑧
- Parc des Buttes-Chaumont ⑰
- Parc Montsouris ㉓
- Jardin des Plantes ㉕
- Parc André Citroën ㉘

Cemeteries

- Cimetière de Montmartre ⑬
- Cimetière du Père Lachaise ⑱
- Cimetière du Montparnasse ㉚

Historic Districts

- *Montmartre pp132–3* ⑩
- Canal St-Martin ⑯
- Montparnasse ㉙

Historic Buildings and Streets

- Rue La Fontaine ④
- Moulin Rouge ⑫
- Château de Vincennes ㉑
- Catacombes ㉛

Modern Architecture

- La Défense ①
- Fondation Le Corbusier ③
- Bercy ⑲
- Bibliothèque Nationale de France ㉒
- Institut du Monde Arabe ㉖

Markets

- Marché aux Puces de St-Ouen ⑭

Theme Parks

- *Cité des Sciences et de l'Industrie pp136–7* ⑮

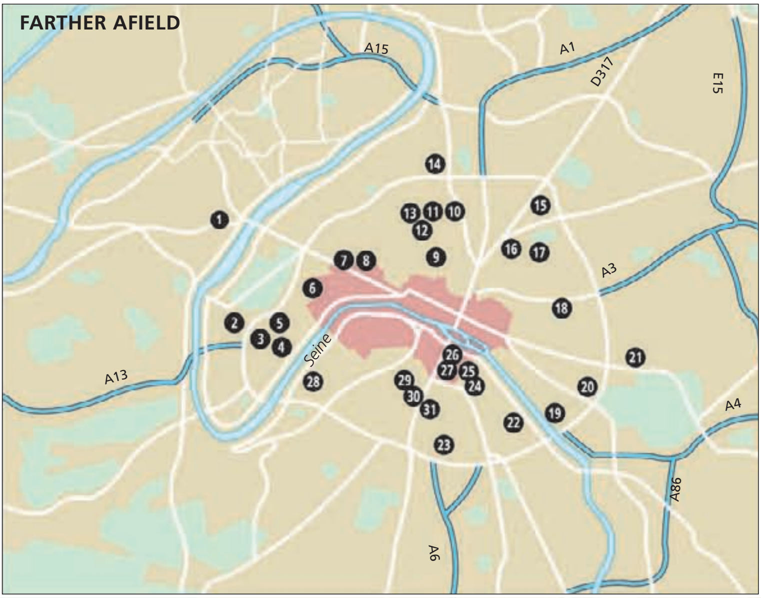
KEY

🟥 Main sightseeing area

▬ Major roads

0 kilometers 4

0 miles 2



◁ The narrow rue St-Rustique winding up the hill to Sacré-Coeur

West of the City

La Défense ❶

La Grande Arche. ***Tel** 01 49 07 27 55.* RER *La Défense.* ○ *10am–7pm daily (8am Apr–Sep).* ✍ ♿ 🍴 🛍 *See **The History of France** pp66–7.*
www.grandearche.com

This skyscraper business city on the western edge of Paris is the largest office development in Europe. La Grande Arche is an enormous hollow cube large enough to contain Notre-Dame cathedral. Designed by Danish architect Otto von Spreckelsen in the late 1980s, the arch houses a gallery and a conference center, and has superb views.

La Grande Arche in La Défense

Bois de Boulogne ❷

75016. M *Porte Maillot, Porte Dauphine, Porte d'Auteuil, Sablons.* ○ *24 hrs daily.* ✍ *to specialist gardens and museum.* ♿

Located between the western edges of Paris and the River Seine, this 2,137-acre (865-ha) park offers a vast belt of greenery for strolling, biking, riding, boating, picnicking, or spending a day at the races. The Bois de Boulogne was once part of the immense Forêt du Rouvre. In the mid-19th century Napoleon III had the Bois designed and landscaped by Baron Haussmann along the lines of Hyde Park in London. Several self-contained parks within the forest include the Jardin d'Acclimatation, a fun park for children, Pré Catalan and the Bagatelle gardens, with architectural follies and an 18th-century villa famous for its rose garden. The villa was built in just 64 days after a bet between the Comte d'Artois and Marie-Antoinette.

By day the Bois is busy with families, joggers, and walkers, but after dark it is notoriously seedy – and best avoided.

A landscaped island in the Bois de Boulogne

Fondation Le Corbusier ❸

8–10 square du Docteur-Blanche 75016. ***Tel** 01 42 88 41 53.* M *Jasmin.* ○ *1:30pm–6pm Mon, 10am–12:30pm & 1:30pm–6pm (5pm Fri) Tue–Fri, 10am–5pm Sat.* ● *pub hols, Aug, Dec 24–Jan 2.* ✍ ***Films, videos**.*
www.fondationlecorbusier.asso.fr

In a quiet corner of Auteuil stand the villas La Roche and Jeanneret, the first two Parisian houses built by the influential 20th-century architect Charles-Edouard Jeanneret, better known as Le Corbusier. Built at the start of the 1920s, they demonstrate his revolutionary use of white concrete in Cubist forms. Rooms flow into each other allowing maximum light and volume, and the houses stand on stilts with windows along their entire length.

Villa La Roche was owned by the art patron Raoul La Roche. Today, the villas hold lectures on Le Corbusier and his work.

An Art Nouveau window in the rue la Fontaine

Rue la Fontaine ❹

75016. **Map** 5 A4. M *Michel-Ange Auteuil, Jasmin.* RER *Radio-France.*

The rue la Fontaine and surrounding streets act as a showcase for some of the most exciting early 20th-century, low-cost architecture, featuring sinuous decorative detail. At No. 14 stands the Castel Béranger, which firmly established the reputation of architect Hector Guimard. He went on to design the city's Art Nouveau metro entrances.

Musée Marmottan-Claude Monet ❺

2 rue Louis Boilly 75016. ***Tel** 01 44 96 50 33.* M *Muette.* ○ *11am–6pm Tue–Sun (to 9pm Tue).* ● *Jan 1, May 1, Dec 25.* ✍ ♿ 🛍
www.marmottan.com

The museum was created in the 19th-century mansion of the famous art historian, Paul Marmottan, in 1932. He bequeathed his house, plus his Renaissance, Consular, and First Empire paintings and furniture, to the Institut de France.

In 1971 the museum acquired a fabulous collection of work by Impressionist painter Claude Monet, the bequest of his son, Michel. Some of Monet's most famous paintings are here, including

Impression – Sunrise (hence the term "Impressionist"), a painting of Rouen Cathedral *(see p267)*, and the *Waterlilies* series *(see p98)*. Also here is the work painted at Giverny during the last years of Monet's life. This includes *The Japanese Bridge* and *The Weeping Willow*. The iridescent colors and daring brush-strokes make these some of the museum's most powerful works.

Part of Monet's personal art collection was passed on to the museum, including work by fellow Impressionists Camille Pissarro, Pierre- Auguste Renoir, and Alfred Sisley. The museum also displays medieval illuminated manuscripts and 16th-century Burgundian tapestries Piano and chamber music concerts are held on the third Tuesday of each month.

Musée du Cristal de Baccarat ❻

11 pl des Etats Unis 75016. ***Tel*** *01 40 22 11 00.* M *Boissière.* ○ *10am–6:30pm Mon, Wed–Sat (last adm 6pm).* ● *public hols.* ♿ 📷 ☞ *by appt.* **www**.baccarat.fr

The Musée du Cristal, also known as the Galerie-Musée Baccarat, displays over 1,200 items made by the Baccarat company, which was founded in 1764 in Lorraine in eastern France. These include dinner services created for the royal and imperial courts of Europe and many of the best contemporary pieces produced in the workshops, such as fine vases, candelabras, decanters, and perfume bottles, as well as watches and jewelry.

In the glassworks itself you can see some of the technical skills used to shape and decorate the crystal ware, such as fine cutting, wheel-engraving, gilding and enameling.

Le Vase d'Abyssinie, made of Baccarat crystal and bronze

Colonnade beside the *naumachia* basin in Parc Monceau

North of the City

St-Alexandre-Nevsky Cathedral

St-Alexandre-Nevsky ❼

12 rue Daru 75008. **Map** 2 F3. ***Tel*** *01 42 27 37 34.* M *Courcelles, Ternes.* ○ *3–5pm Tue, Fri, Sun.* ☞ ✝ *6pm Sat, 10:30am Sun.*

This imposing Russian Orthodox cathedral with its five golden-copper domes signals the presence of a large Russian community in Paris. Designed by members of the St. Petersburg Fine Arts Academy and financed jointly by Tsar Alexander II and the local Russian community, it was completed in 1861.

Inside, a wall of icons divides the church in two. The Greek-cross plan and the rich mosaics and frescoes decorating the interior walls are Neo-Byzantine in style, while the exterior and gilt domes are traditional Russian Orthodox in design.

Parc Monceau ❽

Bd de Courcelles 75017. **Map** 3 A3. ***Tel*** *01 42 27 08 64.* M *Monceau.* ○ *7am–8pm daily (10pm summer).*

This green haven dates back to 1778 when the Duc de Chartres commissioned the painter-writer and amateur landscape designer Louis Carmontelle to create a magnificent garden. The result was an exotic landscape full of architectural follies in the English and German style.

In 1852 the land was acquired by the state and made into a chic public park. A few of the original features remain, among them the *naumachia* basin – an ornamental version of a Roman pool used for simulating naval battles.

Musée Gustave Moreau ❾

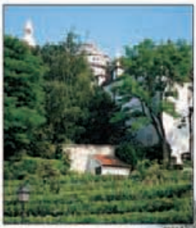
14 rue de la Rochefoucauld 75009. **Map** 4 E3. ***Tel*** *01 48 74 38 50.* M *Trinité.* ○ *10am–12:45pm, 2– 5:15pm Wed–Mon.* ● *some public hols.* ♿ 📷 🛍 **www**.musee-moreau.fr

The Symbolist painter Gustave Moreau (1826– 98), known for his symbolic works depicting biblical and mythological fantasies, lived and worked in this handsome town house. *Jupiter and Semele,* one of the artist's outstanding works, is displayed here, along with other major paintings, and some of the collection's 7,000 drawings and 1,000 oils and watercolors.

Montmartre ⑩

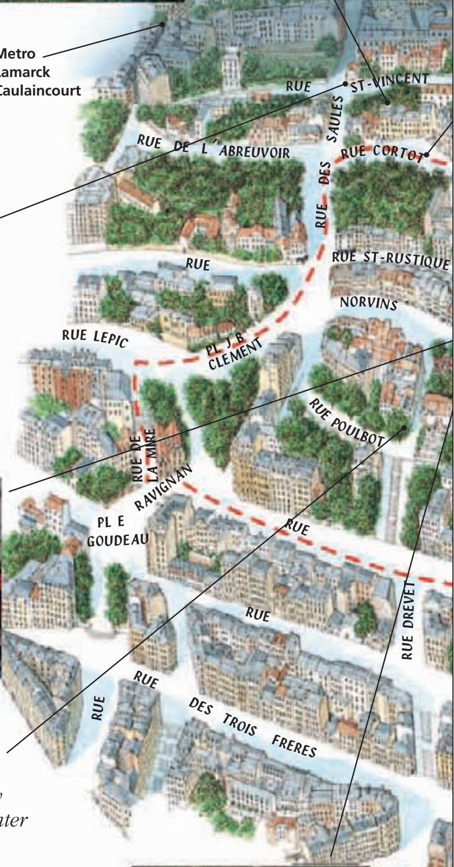
The steep *butte* (hill) of Montmartre has been associated with artists for 200 years. Théodore Géricault and Camille Corot came here at the start of the 19th century, and in the 20th century Maurice Utrillo immortalized the streets in his works. Today, street artists thrive predominantly on the tourist trade, but much of the area still preserves its rather louche, villagey prewar atmosphere. The name of the area is ascribed to martyrs who were tortured and killed in the area around AD 250, hence *mons martyrium*.

Streetside painter



Montmartre Vineyard

This is the last Parisian vineyard. The harvest is celebrated on the first Saturday in October.


RUE ST-VINCENT
RUE DES SAULES
RUE DE L´ABREUVOIR
RUE CORTOT
RUE ST-RUSTIQUE
RUE NORVINS
RUE LEPIC
PL J B CLEMENT
RUE POULBOT
RUE DE LA MIRE
RAVIGNAN
PL E GOUDEAU
RUE
RUE DREVET
RUE
RUE DES TROIS FRERES
RUE

Metro Lamarck Caulaincourt

Au Lapin Agile

"The Agile Rabbit," once a literary haunt, is now a nightclub.

A la Mère Catherine

This was a favorite restaurant of Russian cossacks. They would shout "Bistro!" (meaning "quick") – which gave the bistro its name.

Espace Montmartre Salvador Dalí

Some 330 works by the Surrealist painter and sculptor are on display here.

Place du Tertre

The tourist center of Montmartre is full of portraitists. Artists first exhibited in the square in the 19th century.

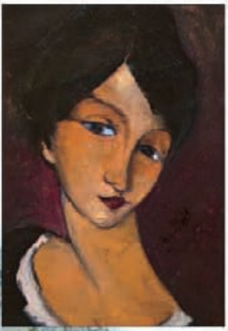
KEY

▬ ▬ Suggested route

0 meters 100

0 yards 100

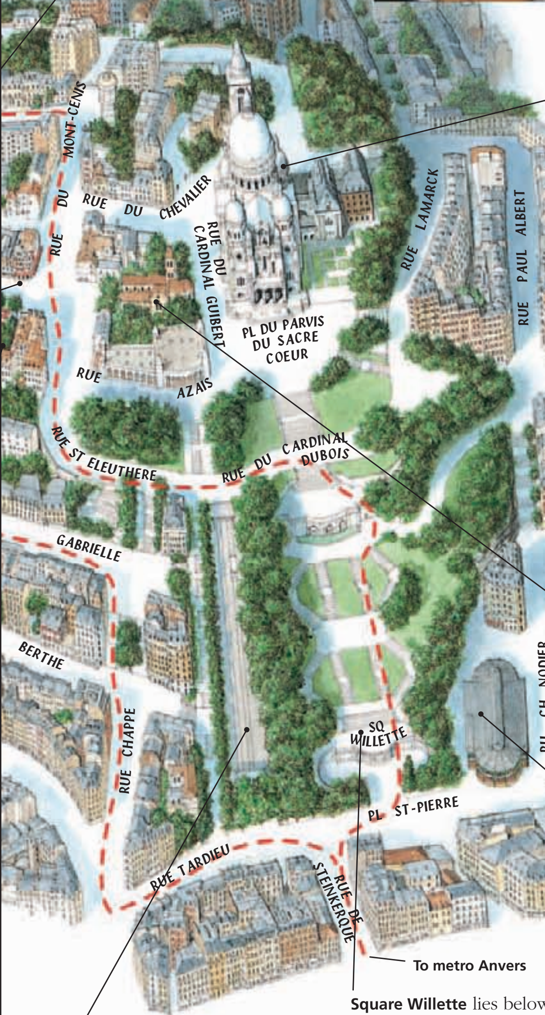
Musée de Montmartre
Changing, Montmarte-related exhibitions usually include works by artists who lived here, such as this Portrait of a Woman *(1918) by* Amedeo Modigliani.

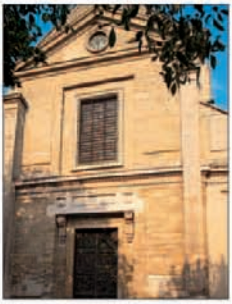


MONTMARTRE
TUILERIES AND OPERA
BEAUBOURG

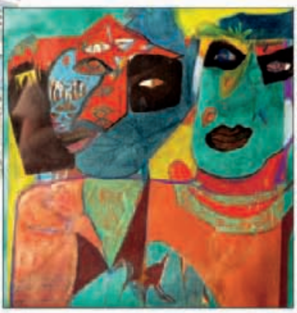
LOCATOR MAP
See Street Finder maps 3, 4

Sacré-Coeur
This Neo-Romanesque church, started in the 1870s and completed in 1914, contains many treasures, such as this figure of the Virgin Mary and Child *(1896) by P. Brunet* ⑪


RUE DU MONT-CENIS
RUE DU CHEVALIER
RUE DU CARDINAL GUIBERT
PL DU PARVIS DU SACRE COEUR
RUE LAMARCK
RUE PAUL ALBERT
RUE AZAIS
RUE ST ELEUTHERE
RUE DU CARDINAL DUBOIS
GABRIELLE
BERTHE
RUE CHAPPE
SQ WILLETTE
RU CH NODIER
PL ST-PIERRE
RUE TARDIEU
RUE DE STEINKERQUE
To metro Anvers



St-Pierre de Montmartre
This is an early Parisian church with origins dating back to the 6th century.



Musée de la Halle Saint Pierre
Exhibitions here showcase Outsider Art and Art Brut, such as this piece by S. Feleggakis.

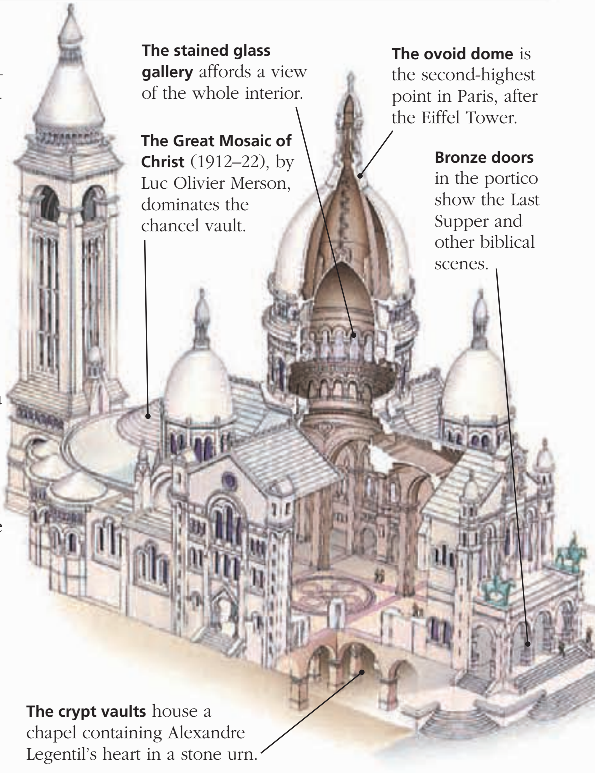
The funiculaire, or cable railroad, at the end of the rue Foyatier takes you to the foot of the basilica of the Sacré-Coeur. Metro tickets are valid for it.

Square Willette lies below the forecourt of the Sacré-Coeur. It is laid out on the side of the hill in a series of descending terraces with lawns, shrubs, trees, and flowerbeds.

Sacré-Coeur ⑪

Parvis de Notre Dame 75018. **Map** 4 F1. ***Tel*** *01 53 41 89 00.* M *Abbesses (then funiculaire to steps of Sacré-Coeur), Anvers.* 🚌 *30, 31, 80, 85.* ***Basilica*** ○ *6am–11pm daily.* ***Dome & crypt*** ○ *9am–6pm daily.* ⊘ ✝ *7am, 11:15am, 6:30pm, 10pm Mon–Thu, Sat; 3pm Fri; 11am, 6pm, 10pm Sun (Vespers 4pm).* **www**.sacre-coeur-montmartre.com

The Sacré-Coeur basilica, dedicated to the Sacred Heart of Christ and consecrated in 1919, was built as a result of a private religious vow made at the outbreak of the Franco-Prussian war. Two Catholic businessmen, Alexandre Legentil and Hubert Rohault de Fleury, promised to finance the basilica should France be spared from assault. Despite the war and the Siege of Paris, invasion was averted and work began in 1875 to Paul Abadie's designs. Never considered very graceful, the basilica is vast and impressive, and one of France's most important Roman Catholic buildings.



The stained glass gallery affords a view of the whole interior.

The ovoid dome is the second-highest point in Paris, after the Eiffel Tower.

The Great Mosaic of Christ (1912–22), by Luc Olivier Merson, dominates the chancel vault.

Bronze doors in the portico show the Last Supper and other biblical scenes.

The crypt vaults house a chapel containing Alexandre Legentil's heart in a stone urn.

Moulin Rouge ⑫

82 bd de Clichy 75018. **Map** 4 E1. ***Tel*** *01 53 09 82 82.* M *Blanche.* ***Shows*** *at 9pm & 11pm daily; two matinées per month at 2:45pm.* ⊘ **www**.moulinrouge.com

Built in 1885, the Moulin Rouge was turned into a dance hall as early as 1900. Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec immortalized the wild and colorful cancan shows here in his posters and drawings of famous dancers such as Jane Avril. The high-kicking routines continue today in glitzy, Las Vegas-style revues.

Cimetière de Montmartre ⑬

20 av Rachel 75018. **Map** 4 D1. ***Tel*** *01 53 42 36 30.* M *Place de Clichy.* ○ *8:30am–5:30pm Mon–Sat, 9am–5:30pm Sun (6pm summer).* ♿

This has been the resting place for many luminaries of the creative arts since the beginning of the 19th century. The composers Hector Berlioz and Jacques Offenbach (who wrote the famous cancan tune), Russian dancer Waslaw Nijinsky, and film director François Truffaut are just a few of the famous people who have been buried here over the years.

There is also a Montmartre cemetery near square Roland-Dorgelès, known as the St-Vincent cemetery. This is where the French painter Maurice Utrillo is buried.

African stall in the Marché aux Puces de St-Ouen

Marché aux Puces de St-Ouen ⑭

Rue des Rosiers, St-Ouen 75018. M *Porte-de-Clignancourt.* ○ *9am–6pm Sat–Mon. See* ***Shops and Markets*** *p142.* **www**.les-puces.com

This is the oldest and largest of the Paris flea markets, covering 15 acres (6 ha) near the Porte de Clignancourt. In the 19th century, rag merchants and tramps would gather outside the fortifications that marked the city limits and offer their wares for sale. Today the area is divided into separate markets, and is well-known for its heavy Second Empire furniture and ornaments. Although there are few bargains to be had, this does not deter the huge weekend crowds.

Cité des Sciences et de l'Industrie ⑮

See pp136–7.

Canal St-Martin ⑯

M *Jaurès, J Bonsergent, Goncourt.*

A walk along the quays on either side of the Canal St-Martin gives a glimpse of how this thriving, industrial, working-class area of the city looked at the end of the 19th century. The 3-mile (5-km) canal, opened in 1825, provided a shortcut for river traffic between loops of the Seine. A smattering of brick-and-iron factories and warehouses survive from this time along the quai de Jemmapes. Here, too, is the legendary Hôtel du Nord, from Marcel Carné's 1930s film of the same name. The canal itself is quietly busy with barges and anglers; around it are tree-lined quays with quirky stores and cafés, iron footbridges, and public gardens. At Jaurès, it meets the Canal de l'Ourcq, which offers a pleasant stroll to Parc de la Villette *(see p136).*

Parc des Buttes-Chaumont ⑰

Rue Manin 75019 (access from rue Armand Carrel). *No phone.* M *Botzaris, Buttes-Chaumont.* ○ *7am–8:15pm (10:15pm Jun–Aug 15; 9:15pm May & Aug 16–Sep 30) daily.*

For many this is the most pleasant park in Paris. Urban planner Baron Haussmann converted the hilly site from a garbage dump and quarry, with gallows at the foot, to English-style gardens in the 1860s. His colleague was landscape architect Adolphe Alphand, who was also responsible for a vast 1860s program to provide Haussmann's new sidewalk-lined Parisian avenues with benches, streetlights, kiosks, and urinals *(see p108).*

Others involved in the creation of this highly praised park were the engineer Darcel and the landscape gardener Barillet-Deschamps. They created a lake, made an island with real and artificial rocks, gave it a Roman-style temple, and added a waterfall, streams, and footbridges leading to the island. Today, in summer, visitors will also find boating facilities, donkey rides, and beautiful lawns.

Boats moored at Port de l'Arsenal

East of the City

Cimetière du Père Lachaise ⑱

16 rue du Repos, 75020. ***Tel*** *01 55 25 82 10.* M *Père Lachaise, A Dumas.* 🚌 *26, 62, 69 to pl Gambetta* P *Pl Gambetta* ○ *8am–5:30pm (6pm Apr–Nov; from 9am Sun & hols) daily.* **www**.pere-lachaise.com

Paris's most prestigious cemetery is set on a wooded hill overlooking the city. The land was once owned by Père de la Chaise, Louis XIV's confessor, but it was bought by order of Napoleon in 1803. The cemetery became so popular that the boundaries were extended six times during the 19th century. Here are buried celebrities such as writer Honoré de Balzac and composer Frédéric Chopin, and actors Yves Montand and Simone Signoret.

Bercy ⑲

75012. M *Bercy, Cour St-Emilion.* ***Cinémathèque Française****: 51 rue de Bercy.* ***Tel*** *01 71 19 32 00.* ○ *noon–7pm Mon–Sat, 10am–8pm Sun.*

This former wine-trading quarter just east of the city center, with its once-grim riverside warehouses and pavilions and slum housing, has been transformed into an ultramodern district beside the Seine. A new automatic metro line (Line 14) links it to the heart of the city.

Centerpiece of this new district is the Palais d'Omnisports de Paris-Bercy (POPB), now the city center's principal venue for major concerts, as well as its premier sports stadium. The vast pyramidal structure, its steep sides clad with real lawns, has become a contemporary landmark for the eastern part of central Paris.

Other architecturally adventurous commercial buildings dominate the skyline, notably Chemetov's Ministry of Finance building and Frank Gehry's American Center, which houses the **Cinémathèque Française**, a cinema museum with film screenings, a library, and retrospectives on directors.

At the foot of these structures, the imaginative 173-acre (70-ha) Parc de Bercy provides a welcome green space. Former wine stores and cellars along Cours St. Emilion have been restored as restaurants, bars, and stores. Some of the warehouses have been restructured as the Pavillons de Bercy, one of which contains the Musée des Arts Forains (Fairground Museum).

Bercy's striking American Center, designed by Frank Gehry

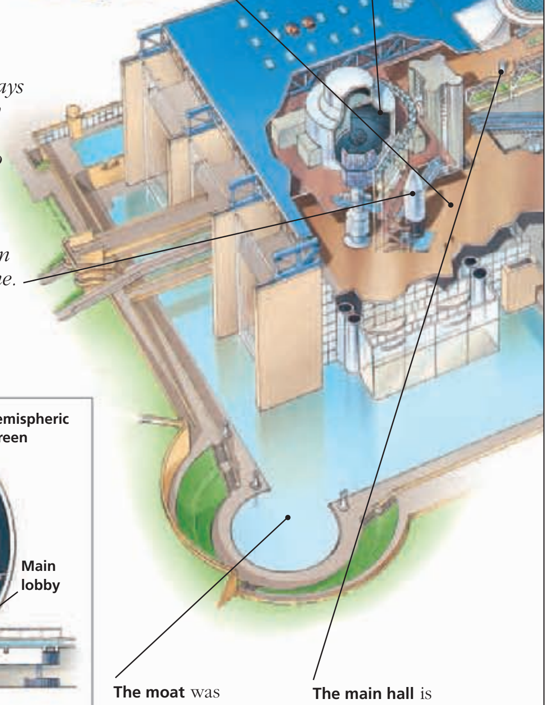
Cité des Sciences et de l'Industrie ⓯

Modern folly in the Parc de la Villette

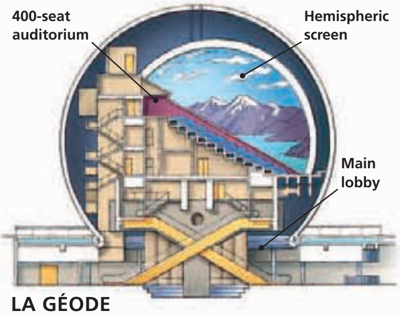
This hugely popular science and technology museum occupies the largest of the old Villette slaughterhouses, which now form part of a massive urban park. Architect Adrien Fainsilber has created an imaginative interplay of light, vegetation, and water in the high-tech, five-story building, which soars 133-ft (40-m) high, stretching over 7 acres (3 ha). At the museum's heart is the Explora exhibit, a fascinating guide to the worlds of science and technology. Visitors can take part in computerized games on space, the earth and ocean, computers and sound. On other levels there are a children's science city, cinemas, a science newsroom, a library, and stores.

Planetarium
In this 260-seat auditorium you can watch eclipses and fly over Martian landscapes, thanks to their 3D video system.

Le Nautile
This full-scale model of the Nautile, France's technologically advanced exploration submarine, represents one of the most sophisticated machines in the world.



★ Ariane
Rocket displays explain how astronauts are sent into space, and include an example of the European rocket Ariane.



LA GÉODE

This giant entertainment sphere houses a huge hemispherical cinema screen, 11,000 sq ft (1,000 sq m), showing IMAX movies about nature, travel, history, and space.

The moat was designed by Fainsilber so that natural light could penetrate into the lower levels of the building.

The main hall is vast, with a soaring network of shafts, bridges, escalators, and balconies, and has a cathedral-like atmosphere.

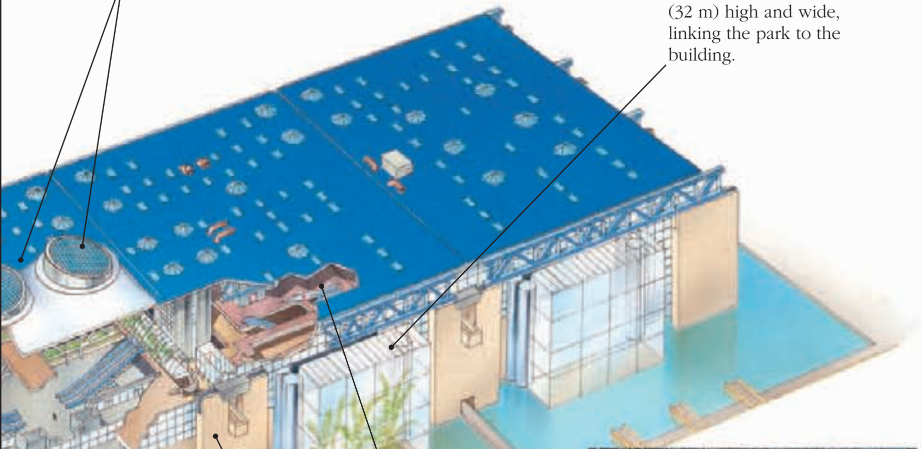
STAR EXHIBITS

- ★ Children's City
- ★ Ariane
- ★ La Géode

VISITORS' CHECKLIST

30 av Corentin-Cariou 75019. ☎ *01 40 05 80 00.* **M** *Porte de la Villette.* 🚌 *75, 139, 150, 152, 249, PC.* ○ *10am–6pm Tue–Sat (7pm Sun).* ♿ 🍴 ☕ 🎧 ***Shows, movies, videos, library, conference center.*** **www**.cite-sciences.fr

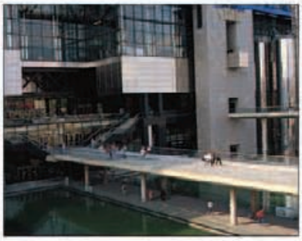
Cupolas
The two glazed domes, 56 ft (17 m) in diameter, filter the flow of natural light into the main hall.



The greenhouse is 105 ft (32 m) high and wide, linking the park to the building.

Mirage Aircraft
A full-size model of the French-built jet fighter is one of the exhibits illustrating advances in technology.

To La Géode



Walkways
The walkways cross the encircling moat to link the various floors of the museum to the Géode and the park.

★ Children's City
In this lively, extensive area children can experiment and play with machines that show how scientific principles work.

Bibliothèque Nationale de France

Cité Nationale de l'Histoire de l'Immigration ⑳

293 av Daumesnil 75012. ***Tel*** *01 44 74 84 80.* M *Porte Dorée.* ○ *10am–5:30pm Tue–Fri (to 7pm Sat, Sun).* ● *May 1.* ✋ ♿ *restricted.* 🛍

Housed in the Palais de la Porte Dorée, this museum is devoted to immigration in France. The palace itself is an Art Deco building designed by architects Albert Laprade and Léon Jaussely for the city's grand colonial exhibition in 1931.

The cellar also contains tropical fish collections, along with tortoises and crocodiles.

Château de Vincennes ㉑

Av de Paris 94300 Vincennes. ***Tel*** *01 48 08 31 20.* M *Château de Vincennes.* RER *Vincennes.* ○ *10am–5pm daily (6pm May–Aug).* ● *1 Jan, 1 May, 1 & 11 Nov, 25 Dec.* ***Chapel & donjon*** ✋ 👉 *only.* 🛍 **www**.chateau-vincennes.fr

The Château de Vincennes was the permanent royal residence until the 17th century, before the court moved to Versailles. The donjon, the tallest fortified medieval building in Europe, the Gothic chapel, 17th-century pavilions, and moat are all worth seeing.

Beyond lies the Bois de Vincennes. Once a royal hunting ground, it is now a landscaped forest with ornamental lakes and a racecourse.

Bibliothèque Nationale de France ㉒

Quai François-Mauriac 75013. ***Tel*** *01 53 79 59 59.* M *Bibliothèque François-Mitterrand.* ○ *10am–7pm Mon–Sat, 1–7pm Sun.* ● *public hols, 2 wks mid-Sep.* ✋ ♿ 🍴 🛍 **www**.bnf.fr

These four great book-shaped towers house 10 million volumes. The libraries offer over 400,000 titles. Other resources include digitized illustrations, sound archives, and CD-ROMs. There are also frequent temporary exhibitions.

South of the City

Parc Montsouris ㉓

Bd Jourdan 75014. ***Tel*** *01 45 88 28 60.* M *Pte d'Orléans.* RER *Cité Universitaire.* ○ *8am–8:30pm (5:30pm winter) daily.*

This English-style park, the second largest in Paris, was laid out by the landscape architect Adolphe Alphand from 1865–1878. With its restaurant, lawns, and lake – home to a variety of birds – it is popular with students and children.

Skull of the reptile dimetrodon

Musée National d'Histoire Naturelle ㉔

2 rue Buffon 75005. **Map** 14 D1. ***Tel*** *01 40 79 54 79.* M *Jussieu, Austerlitz.* ○ *10am–6pm Wed–Mon.* ● *1 May.* ✋ ♿ *restr.* ☕ 🛍 🚫 ***Library*** **www**.mnhn.fr

The highlight of the museum is the Grande Galerie de l'Evolution. There are also four other departments: palaeontology, featuring skeletons, casts of various animals, and an exhibition showing the evolution of the vertebrate skeleton; palaeobotany, devoted to plant fossils; mineralogy, including gemstones; and entomology, with some of the oldest fossilized insects on earth. The bookstore is in the house that was occupied by the naturalist Buffon from 1772 until his death in 1788.

Jardin des Plantes ㉕

57 rue Cuvier 75005. **Map** 13 C1. ***Tel*** *01 40 79 56 01.* M *Jussieu, Austerlitz.* ○ *8am–5:30pm (5pm winter) daily.*

The botanical gardens were established in 1626 when Jean Hérouard and Guy de la Brosse, Louis XIII's physicians, obtained permission to found a royal medicinal herb garden. A school of botany, natural history, and pharmacy followed and the garden opened to the public in 1640. One of the city's great parks, it contains a natural history museum, botanical school, and zoo.

As well as beautiful vistas and walkways flanked by ancient statues, the park has an alpine garden with plants from Corsica, Morocco, the Alps, and the Himalayas, and an unrivaled display of herbaceous and wild plants. The Cedar of Lebanon here, originally from Britain's Kew Gardens, was the first to be planted in France.

Rue Mouffetard, one of several markets near Jardin des Plantes

For hotels and restaurants in this region see pp550–5 and pp600–6

Institut du Monde Arabe ㉖

1 rue des Fossés St-Bernard 75005. **Map** 9 C5. ***Tel*** *01 40 51 38 38.* M *Jussieu, Cardinal-Lemoine.* ***Museum & temp exhibs*** ○ *10am–6pm Tue–Sun.* ***Library*** ○ *1–8pm Tue–Sat.* 📷 ✋ ♿ ☕ 🍴 **www**.imarabe.org

This magnificent modern building was designed by French architect Jean Nouvel, and cleverly combines high-tech details with the spirit of traditional Arab architecture.

From the fourth to seventh floors there is a comprehensive display of Islamic works of art from the 9th to the 19th centuries including glassware, ceramics, and sculpture. The museum's highlight is the fine collection of *astrolabes*, the much-prized tool used by the ancient Arabic astronomers.

Mosquée de Paris ㉗

Pl du Puits de l'Ermite 75005. ***Tel*** *01 45 35 97 33.* M *Place Monge.* ○ *9am–noon, 2–6pm Sat–Thu.* ● *Muslim hols.* 📷 ✋ ☕ 🍴 ***Library*** **www**.mosquee-de-paris.org

Built in the 1920s in the Hispano-Moorish style, these buildings are the center for Paris's Muslim community. Once used solely by scholars, the mosque has expanded over the years and now houses some salubrious but fun Turkish baths, a fine restaurant, and beautiful *salon de thé*.

Parc André Citroën ㉘

Rue Balard 75015. ***Tel*** *01 40 71 74 03.* M *Javel, Balard.* ○ *7:30am–dusk Mon–Fri (9am w/e, public hols).*

Designed by both landscapers and architects, this park is a fascinating blend of styles, ranging from wildflower meadow in the north to sophisticated monochrome mineral and sculpture gardens in the southern section. Modern water sculptures dot the park.

Institut du Monde Arabe, covered with photosensitive lightscreens

Tour Montparnasse

Montparnasse ㉙

75014 & 75015. **Map** 11 & 12. M *Vavin, Raspail, Edgar Quinet.* ***Tour Montparnasse*** ○ *9:30am–11pm.*

The name Montparnasse was first used ironically in the 17th century, when arts students performed their work on a "mount" of rubble left over from quarrying. In ancient Greece, Mount Parnassus was dedicated to poetry, music, and beauty. By the 19th century, crowds were drawn to the local cabarets and bars by duty-free prices. The mixture of art and high living was particularly potent in the 1920s and 1930s when Hemingway, Picasso, Cocteau, Giacometti, Matisse, and Modigliani were "Montparnos," as the residents were called. This epoch ended with World War II. The modern *quartier* is dominated by the much-hated **Tour Montparnasse**, although the view from the top (the 56th floor) is spectacular.

Cimetière du Montparnasse ㉚

3 bd Edgar Quinet 75014. **Map** 12 D3. ***Tel*** *01 44 10 86 50.* M *Edgar Quinet.* ○ *mid-Mar–Nov: 8am–6pm Mon– Fri, 8:30am–6pm Sat, 9am–6pm Sun; Dec–mid-Mar: closes 5:30pm.*

Montparnasse cemetery opened in 1824. Among those buried here are Serge Gainsbourg, Charles Baudelaire, Jean-Paul Sartre and Simone de Beauvoir, and Guy de Maupassant.

Catacombes ㉛

1 av du Colonel Henri Rol-Tanguy 75014. **Map** 12 E3. ***Tel*** *01 43 22 47 63.* M *Denfert-Rochereau.* ○ *10am–5pm Tue–Sun.* ● *public hols.* 📷 ✋ **www**.catacombes.paris.fr

A long series of quarry tunnels built in Roman times, the catacombs are now lined with ancient bones and skulls. Thousands of rotting corpses were transported here in the 1780s to absorb the excess from the insanitary Les Halles cemetery.

Skulls and bones stored in the catacombes

SHOPS AND MARKETS

For many people, Paris epitomizes luxury and good living. Exquisitely dressed men and women sip wine by the banks of the Seine against the backdrop of splendid French architecture, or shop at small specialty stores. The least expensive way of joining the chic set is to create French style with accessories or costume jewelry. Alternatively, try shopping in the January or July sales. If your budget allows, take the opportunity to buy world-famous Paris fashions, or feast on the wonderful gourmet delicacies displayed with consummate artistry. Parisian shopping streets and markets are the ideal place to indulge in the French custom of strolling for the express purpose of seeing and being seen. For up-to-the-minute high fashion, the rue du Faubourg-St-Honoré is hard to beat, with its exquisite couture window displays. Browsing around the bookstalls along the Seine is another favorite French pastime. A survey of some of the best and most famous places to shop follows.

Shopping in avenue Montaigne

OPENING HOURS

Stores are usually open from 10am–7pm, Monday to Saturday, but hours can vary. Many department stores stay open late on Thursday, while boutiques may shut for an hour or two at midday. Markets and local neighborhood stores usually close on Mondays. Some places shut for the summer, usually in August, but they may leave a note on the door suggesting an open equivalent nearby.

PAYMENT AND TAX

Cash is readily available from the ATMs in most banks, which accept both credit and bank debit cards. Visa and MasterCard are the most widely accepted credit cards.

A sales tax (TVA) from 5.5–19.6 per cent is imposed on most goods and services in EU countries. Non-EU residents shopping in France are entitled to a refund of this if they spend a minimum of 175€ in one store in one day. You must have been resident in France for less than six months and either carry the goods with you out of the country within three months of purchase, or get the store to forward them to you. Larger stores will generally supply a form *(bordereau de détaxe* or *bordereau de vente)* and help you to fill it in. When you leave France or the EU you present the form to Customs, who either permit you to be reimbursed straightaway, or forward your claim to the place where you bought the merchandise; the shop eventually sends you a refund.

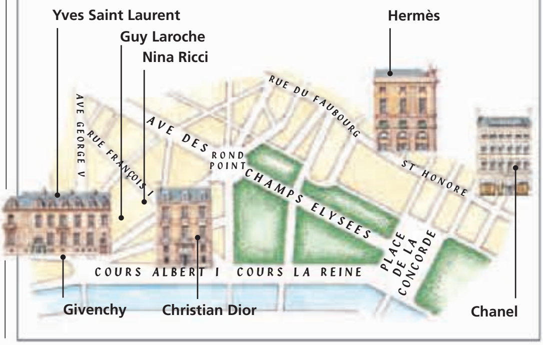
The Chanel logo, recognized worldwide

SALES

The best sales *(soldes)* are held in January and July, although you can sometimes find sale items before Christmas. If you see goods labelled *Stock*, it means that they are stock items, reduced for clearance. *Dégriffé* means designer labels, (with the label cut out) marked down, frequently from the previous year's collections. *Fripes* indicates that the clothes are second-hand.

THE CENTER OF PARIS COUTURE

The couture houses are concentrated on the Right Bank, around rue du Faubourg-St-Honoré and avenue Montaigne.



DEPARTMENT STORES

Much of the pleasure of shopping in Paris is derived from going to the small specialty stores. But if time is short, try the *grands magasins* (department stores). Some still operate a ticket system for selling goods. The store assistant writes up a ticket for goods from their own boutique which you take to one of the cashiers. You then return with your validated ticket to pick up your purchase. This can be time-consuming, so go early in the morning and don't shop on Saturdays, unless you enjoy a crowd. The French do not pay much attention to lines so be assertive! One peculiarity of a visit is that the security guards may ask to inspect your bags as you leave. These are random checks and should not be taken as an implication of theft.

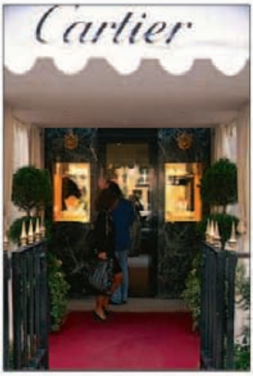
Kenzo designerwear in the place des Victoires

All department stores have places to eat, although the stores themselves tend to have different emphases. **Au Printemps** is noted for its exciting and innovative household goods section, vast cosmetic range, and large menswear store. The clothes departments for women and children are well stocked. Fashion shows are held at 10am on Tuesdays (and each Friday from April to October: by invitation only). The lovely domed restaurant in the cupola often hosts chic after-hours parties, which are private, but a visit to the restaurant during shopping hours is worthwhile.

The 1865 façade of Au Printemps department store

BHV (Le Bazar de l'Hôtel de Ville) is a home improver's paradise, and sells a host of other items, such as fashion decor. The Left Bank's **Le Bon Marché** was Paris's first department store and today is its chicest. The designer clothing sections are well-sourced, the high-end accessories are excellent, and the own-brand linen has a good quality to price ratio. The prepared food sections serve restaurant-quality fare to take out.

Galeries Lafayette is perhaps the best-known department store and has a wide range of clothes available at all price levels. Its first-floor trends section plays host to lots of innovative designers. Galeries Lafayette Gourmet, the food court, sells a range of French and international delicacies. Across the road is the store's housewares building, which stocks a good range of kitchenware.



Cartier, one of the world's most exclusive stores

Virgin Megastore is open until late and has an excellent record selection and an impressive book section. **FNAC** specializes in records, books (foreign editions can be found at Les Halles), and electronic equipment, while **FNAC Digitale** sells a wide range of the latest technological equipment.

ADDRESSES

Au Printemps

64 bd Haussmann 75009.
Map 4 D4. ***Tel*** *01 42 82 50 00.*
www.printemps.com

BHV

52–64 rue de Rivoli 75004.
Map 9 B3. ***Tel*** *01 42 74 90 00.*

Le Bon Marché

24 rue de Sèvres 75007.
Map 7 C5. ***Tel*** *01 44 39 80 00.*
www.treeslbm.com

FNAC

Forum des Halles, 1 rue Pierre Lescot 75001. **Map** 9 A2.
Tel *0825 020 020.*
www.fnac.com

FNAC Digitale

77–81 bd St-Germain 75006. **Map** 9 A5. ***Tel*** *0825 020 020.*

Galeries Lafayette

40 bd Haussmann 75009. **Map** 4 E4.
Tel *01 42 82 34 56.*
www.galerieslafayette.com

Virgin Megastore

52–60 av des Champs-Elysées 75008. **Map** 2 F5. ***Tel*** *01 42 56 15 96.* **www**.virginmegastore.fr

Clothes and Accessories

For many people Paris is synonymous with fashion, and Parisian style is the ultimate in chic. More than anywhere else in the world, women in Paris seem to be in tune with current trends and when a new season arrives appear, as one, to don the look. Though less trend-conscious generally, Parisian men are aware of style, and mix and match patterns and colors with *élan*. Finding the right clothes at the right price means knowing where to shop. For every luxury boutique on the avenue Montaigne, there are ten young designers' stores waiting to become the next Jean-Paul Gaultier – and hundreds more selling imitations.

HAUTE COUTURE

Paris is the home of *haute couture*. The original *couture* garments, as opposed to the imitations and adaptations, are one-time creations, designed by one of the nine *haute couture* houses listed with the Fédération Française de la Couture. The rules for being classified are fairly strict, and many of the top designers are not included. Astronomical prices put *haute couture* beyond the reach of all but a few immensely deep pockets, but it is still the lifeblood of the fashion industry, providing inspiration for the mass market.

WOMEN'S CLOTHES

Most *couture* houses are found on or near the rue du Faubourg-St-Honoré and avenue Montaigne: **Christian Dior**, **Pierre Cardin**, **Chanel**, **Christian Lacroix**, **Versace**, **Givenchy**, **Nina Ricci**, **Giorgio Armani**, and **Yves Saint Laurent**.

Hermès has classic country chic. **MaxMara's** Italian elegance is popular in France and no one can resist a Giorgio Armani suit. The legendary **Prada** store has stuck to the Right Bank but many fashion houses prefer the Left Bank.

Many designers have a Left Bank branch in addition to their Right Bank bastions, and they all have ready-to-wear shops here. For sheer quality there's **Georges Rech**, and **Jil Sander** for exquisite tailoring. Try **Sonia Rykiel** for knitwear and **Barbara Bui** for soft, feminine clothes. In the Saint-Germain-des-Près district, the **Comptoir des Cotonniers** stocks excellent basics, and **Vanessa Bruno** is extremely popular for feminine flair.

For ready-to-wear head to place des Victoires. **Kenzo** is here (although there is a new flagship store near the Pont Neuf), along with fellow Japanese designers **Comme des Garçons**, with its quirky fashion for both sexes. In nearby rue du Jour find the timeless elegance of **Agnès B**.

The Marais is a haven for up-and-coming designers. One of the best streets is the rue des Rosiers, which includes the wonderful **L'Eclaireur**. **Nina Jacob** is on the neighboring rue des Francs-Bourgeois, and daring designer **Azzedine Alaïa's** is just around the corner.

The Bastille area has trendy boutiques, as well as some more established names, including **Jean-Paul Gaultier**. **Isabel Marant's** boutique is renowned for its originality.

Young designers' clothes are found at **Colette**, **Stella Cadente**, and **Zadig and Voltaire**.

CHILDREN'S CLOTHES

Lots of options for children exist in various styles and many price ranges. Many top designers of adult clothes also have boutiques for children. These include **Kenzo**, **Baby Dior**, **Agnès B**. Ready-to-wear shops such as **Jacadi** and **Du Pareil au Même** are serviceable and wide-ranging; and **Tartine et Chocolat's** best-selling garments are overalls. **Bonpoint** stocks adorably chic clothing for mini-Parisians. **Petit Bateau** is coveted as much by grown-ups as it is by children. The inevitable has finally happened – children now have their own concept store in **Bonton**.

For little feet, **Froment-Leroyer** probably offers the best all-round classics.

MEN'S CLOTHES

Men don't have the luxury of *haute couture* dressing and their choice is limited to ready-to-wear. On the Right Bank, there's **Giorgio Armani**, **Pierre Cardin**, **Lanvin** (also good for accessories), and **Yves Saint Laurent**. On the Left Bank, **Michel Axael** and **Jean-Charles de Castelbajac** are known for their ties and **Francesco Smalto's** elegant creations are worn by some of the world's leading movie stars. Yohji Yamamoto's clothes in **Y3** are for those who are intent on making a serious fashion statement, while **Gianni Versace** is classic, suave, and Italian in style.

The ultimate in Parisian elegance for men, however, is a suit, custom-made shirt, or silk tie from **Charvet**.

VINTAGE AND SECOND-HAND STORES

The vintage craze hit Paris some time back and there are some wonderful stores to plunder for a retro look. The best of the bunch is **Didier Ludot**, where an Aladdin's Cave of chic *haute couture* is elegantly displayed. The **Depôt-Vente de Buci-Bourbon** is another good place to bargain hunt. A cheaper option is to head for one of the second-hand consignment stores. Chic Parisians discard their outfits with the seasons so it is very easy to pick up some quality items, often in top condition, from places such as **Réciproque** in Passy or **Alternatives** in the Marais.

A cheaper option for sample pieces and sale stock can be found at **Le Mouton à Cinq Pattes**.

JEWELRY

The *couture* houses probably stock some of the best jewelry and scarves. **Chanel's** jewels are classics and **Christian Lacroix**'s are fun. **Boutique YSL** is a great place for accessories.

Among the main expensive Paris jewelry outlets are **Boucheron**, **Mauboussin** and **Poiray**. They are for the serious jewelry buyer. Other top retailers include **Harry Winston** and **Cartier**. **Dinh Van** has some quirky pieces, whilst **Mikimoto** is a must for pearls, and **H Stern** has some innovative designs using semiprecious and precious stones. For a range of more unusual jewelry and accessories, try the **Daniel Swarovski Boutique**, which is owned by the Swarovksi crystal family.

SHOES AND BAGS

For both classic and wild footwear designs, you can't beat **Miu Miu**. **Rodolphe Ménudier** and **Christian Louboutin** are mainstays for sexy stilettos. **Carel** stocks stylish basics and **Jonak** is a must for good imitations of designer footwear.

For ladies handbags, nothing beats **Chanel** or **Dior** at the top end of the scale, although **Goyard** comes close. Mid-range bags from **Furla** are a great compromise. Fabric bags from **Jamin Puech** or **Vanessa Bruno** are a feature in every chic Parisian closet. For those with tighter purse strings, cheap, cheerful, and stylish bags can be found at **Lollipops**.

LINGERIE

For modern lingerie go to **Fifi Chachnil**, whose store is filled with colouful underwear. **La Boîte à Bas** sells fine French stockings, whereas **Princesse Tam Tam** offers quality items at reasonable prices, while divine designer underwear can be found at cult store **Sabbia Rosa**. The ultimate in Parisian lingerie can be bought off the peg or made to order at **Cadolle**, the store which invented the bra.

DIRECTORY

WOMEN'S CLOTHES

Agnès B
2–3–6–19 rue du Jour.
75001. **Map** 9 A1.
Tel *01 45 08 56 56.*
One of several branches.

Azzedine Alaïa
7 rue de Moussy 75004.
Map 9 C3.
Tel *01 42 72 19 19.*

Barbara Bui
23 rue Etienne-Marcel
75001. **Map** 9 A1.
Tel *01 40 26 43 65.*
www.barbarabui.com
One of four branches.

Chanel
42 av Montaigne 75008.
Map 3 A5. ***Tel*** *01 47 23 47 12. One of several branches.* **www**.chanel.com

Christian Dior
30 av Montaigne 75008.
Map 6 F1.
Tel *01 40 73 73 73.*
www.dior.com

Christian Lacroix
73 rue du Faubourg-St-Honoré 75008. **Map** 3 B5.
Tel *01 42 68 79 04.*
www.christian-lacroix.com

Colette
213 rue St-Honoré 75001.
Map 8D1.
Tel *01 55 35 33 90.*
www.colette.fr

Comme des Garçons
54 rue du Faubourg St-Honoré 75008. **Map** 2 E3.
Tel *01 53 30 27 27.*

Comptoir des Cotonniers
59 rue Bonaparte 75006.
Map 8 E3.
Tel *01 43 26 07 56.*
One of several branches.

L'Eclaireur
3 ter rue des Rosiers
75004. **Map** 9 C3.
Tel *01 48 87 10 22.*

Georges Rech
54 rue Bonaparte 75006.
Map 8 E3.
Tel *01 43 26 84 11.*
www.georges-rech.fr
One of several branches.

Giorgio Armani
18 av Montaigne
75008. **Map** 2 E3.
Tel *01 42 61 55 09*
www.giorgioarmani.com

Givenchy
3 av Georges V 75008.
Map 2 E5.
Tel *01 44 31 50 00.*
www.givenchy.com

Hermès
24 rue du Faubourg-St-Honoré 75008. **Map** 3 C5.
Tel *01 40 17 46 00.*
www.hermes.com
One of several branches.

Isabel Marant
16 rue de Charonne
75011. **Map** 10 F4.
Tel *01 49 29 71 55.*

Jean-Paul Gaultier
6 rue Vivienne 75002.
Map 8 F1.
Tel *01 42 86 05 05.*
One of several branches.

Jil Sander
56 av Montaigne 75008.
Map 6 F1.
Tel *01 44 95 06 70.*

Kenzo
3 pl des Victoires 75001.
Map 8 F1.
Tel *01 40 39 72 03.*
One of several branches.

MaxMara
31 av Montaigne 75008.
Map 6 F1.
Tel *01 47 20 61 13.*
One of several branches.

Nina Jacob
23 rue des Francs-Bourgeois 75004.
Map 10 D3.
Tel *01 42 77 41 20.*

Nina Ricci
39 av Montaigne 75008.
Map 6 F1.
Tel *01 40 88 67 60*
www.ninaricci.fr

Pierre Cardin
27 av de Marigny 75008.
Map 3 B5.
Tel *01 42 66 68 98.*
www.pierrecardin.com
One of two branches.

Prada
10 av Montaigne
75008. **Map** 6 F1.
Tel *01 53 23 99 40.*

Sonia Rykiel
175 bd St-Germain
75006. **Map** 8 D4.
Tel *01 49 54 60 60.*
www.soniarykiel.com
One of several branches.

Stella Cadente
93 quai de Valmy
75010. **Map** 4 D4.
Tel *01 42 09 66 60.*
www.stella-cadente.com

Vanessa Bruno
25 rue St-Sulpice 75006.
Map 8 E5.
Tel *01 43 54 41 04.*

Versace
41 rue François 1er 75008.
Map 2 F5.
Tel *01 47 42 88 02.*
www.versace.com

Yves Saint Laurent
38 rue du Faubourg-St-Honoré 75008. **Map** 3 C5.
Tel *01 42 65 74 59.*
One of several branches.

Zadig & Voltaire
9 rue du 29 Juillet 75001.
Map 8 D1.
Tel *01 42 92 00 80*
One of several branches.

DIRECTORY

CHILDREN'S CLOTHES

Bonpoint
320 rue St-Honoré 75001.
Map 9 A2.
Tel *01 49 27 94 82.*
www.bonpoint.com
One of several branches.

Bonton
82 rue de Grenelle 75007.
Map 6F3.
Tel *01 44 39 09 20.*

Du Pareil au Même
1 rue St-Denis 75001.
Map 9 B3
Tel *01 42 36 07 57*
One of several branches.

Froment-Leroyer
7 rue Vavin 75006.
Map 12 E1.
Tel *01 43 54 33 15.*
www.froment-leroyer.fr
One of several branches.

Jacadi
17 rue Tronchet 75008.
Map 3 C5.
Tel *01 42 65 84 98.*
www.jacadi.fr

Petit Bateau
116 av des Champs Elysées 75008. **Map** 2 E4.
Tel *01 40 74 02 03.*

Tartine et Chocolat
84 rue du Faubourg-St-Honoré 75008. **Map** 3 B5.
Tel *01 45 62 44 04.*

MEN'S CLOTHES

Charvet
28 pl Vendôme 75001. **Map** 4 D5.
Tel *01 42 60 30 70.*

Francesco Smalto
44 rue François 1er 75008. **Map** 2 F5.
Tel *01 47 20 96 04.*
www.smalto.com

Jean-Charles de Castelbajac
10 rue de Vauvilliers 75001.
Tel *01 55 34 10 10*
www.jedecastelbajac.com

Gianni Versace
41 rue François 1er 75008. **Map** 2 F5.
Tel *01 47 42 88 02.*
www.versace.com

Giorgio Armani
(see p143).

Kenzo
(see p143).

Lanvin
22 rue du Faubourg St-Honoré 75008.
Map 10 F4.
Tel *01 44 71 33 33.*
www.lanvin.com
One of several branches.

Michel Axael
121 bd St-Germain 75006.
Map 8 E4.
Tel *01 43 26 01 96.*

Pierre Cardin
(see p143).

Y3
47 rue Etienne Marcel 75001.
Map 9 A1.
Tel *01 45 08 82 45.*

Yves Saint Laurent
12 pl St-Sulpice 75006.
Map 8 D4.
Tel *01 43 26 84 40.*

VINTAGE AND SECOND-HAND STORES

Alternatives
18 rue du Roi-de-Sicile 75004.
Map 9 C3.
Tel *01 42 78 31 50*

Depôt-Vente de Buci-Bourbon
6 rue de Bourbon-le-Château 75006.
Map 8 E4.
Tel *01 46 34 45 05.*

Didier Ludot
19-24 Galerie Montpensier 75001.
Map 8 E1.
Tel *01 42 96 06 56.*
www.didierludot.com

Le Mouton à Cinq Pattes
8 rue St-Placide 75006.
Map 8 D5.
Tel *01 45 48 86 26.*
One of several branches.

Réciproque
95 rue de la Pompe 75016. **Map** 5 A1.
Tel *01 47 04 30 28.*

JEWELRY

Boucheron
26 pl Vendôme 75001.
Map 4 D5.
Tel *01 42 61 58 16.*
www.boucheron.com

Cartier
13 rue de la Paix 75002.
Map 4 D5.
Tel *01 58 18 23 00.*
One of several branches.

Daniel Swarovski Boutique
7 rue Royale 75008.
Map 3 C5.
Tel *01 40 17 07 40.*
www.daniel-swarovski.com

Dinh Van
16 rue de la Paix 75002.
Map 4 D5.
Tel *01 42 61 74 49.*
One of several branches.

H Stern
3 rue Castiglione 75001.
Map 8 D1.
Tel *01 42 60 22 27.*
www.hstern.net
One of several branches.

Harry Winston
29 av Montaigne 75008
Map 6 F1.
Tel *01 47 20 03 09*
www.harrywinston.com

Mauboussin
20 pl Vendôme 75001.
Map 4 D5.
Tel *01 44 55 10 00.*
www.mauboussin.com

Mikimoto
8 pl Vendôme 75001.
Map 4 D5.
Tel *01 42 60 33 55.*

Poiray
1 rue de la Paix 75002.
Map 4 D5.
Tel *01 42 61 70 58.*

SHOES AND BAGS

Carel
4 rue Tronchet 75008.
Map 4 D4.
Tel *01 43 66 21 58.*
One of several branches.

Christian Louboutin
38-40 rue de Grenelle 75007. **Map** 6 F3.
Tel *01 42 22 33 07.*

Furla
8 rue de Sèvres 75006.
Map 7 C5.
Tel *01 40 49 06 44.*
One of several branches.

Goyard
233 rue St-Honoré 75001.
Map 3 C5.
Tel *01 42 60 57 04.*

Jamin Puech
26 rue Gambon 75001.
Map 4 D5.
Tel *01 40 20 40 28.*

Jonak
70 rue de Rennes 75006.
Map 12 D1.
Tel *01 45 48 27 11.*

Lollipops
60 rue Tiquetonne 75002.
Map 9 A1.
Tel *01 42 33 15 72.*
www.lollipops.fr

Miu Miu
219 rue St-Honoré 75001. **Map** 8 D1.
Tel *01 58 62 53 20.*
www.miumiu.com

Rodolphe Ménudier
14 rue de Castiglione 75001. **Map** 8 D1.
Tel *01 42 60 86 27.*

Vanessa Bruno
25 rue St-Sulpice 75006.
Map 8 E5.
Tel *01 43 54 41 04.*

LINGERIE

La Boîte à Bas
27 rue Boissy-d'Anglas 75008. **Map** 3 C5.
Tel *01 42 66 26 85.*

Cadolle
4 rue Cambon 75001.
Map 4 D5.
Tel *01 42 60 94 22.*

Fifi Chachnil
231 rue St-Honoré 75001. **Map** 8 D1.
Tel *01 42 61 21 83.*
www.fifichachnil.com
One of several branches.

Princesse Tam Tam
52 bd St-Michel 75006.
Map 8 F5.
Tel *01 42 34 99 31.*
One of several branches.

Sabbia Rosa
73 rue des Sts-Pères 75006.**Map** 8 D4.
Tel *01 45 48 88 37.*

Gifts and Souvenirs

Paris has a wealth of stylish gift options, from designer accessories to Eiffel Tower paperweights. Stores on the rue de Rivoli and around major tourist attractions offer a range of cheap vacation paraphernalia, or go to one of the souvenir stores such as **Les Drapeaux de France.**

PERFUME

Many shops advertise discounted perfume. They include **Eiffel Shopping** near the Eiffel Tower. The **Sephora** chain has a big selection, or try the department stores for a range of beauty brands which are hard to find elsewhere.

Parfums Caron has many scents created at the turn-of-the-19th century, which are unavailable elsewhere. Beautifully packaged perfumes made from natural essences are available from **Annick Goutal**. **Guerlain** has the ultimate in beauty care, while the elegant stores of **L'Artisan Parfumeur** specialize in exquisitely packaged scents evoking specific memories.

HOUSEHOLD GOODS

It is difficult to ignore some of the world's most elegant tableware. Luxury homeware stores line the rue Royale. **Lalique's** Art Nouveau and Art Deco glass sculptures are collected all over the world. Impeccable silverware comes from **Christofle**.

For significant savings on porcelain and crystal, try **Lumicristal**, which stocks Baccarat, Daum, and Limoges crystal, or why not go to **Baccarat** itself.

La Chaise Longue has a selection of fun gift ideas to suit most tastes and **Bô** has a wide range of contemporary goods to add a new lease of life to any home.

BOOKS

Some large department stores have a books section, and there are several English-language bookstores such as **W H Smith** and **Brentano's**. The cozy **Shakespeare & Co** and **Red Wheelbarow Bookstore** are good for convivial browsing among expats. French-language bookstores include **La Hune** specializing in art, film, fashion, and photography and **Gilbert Joseph** for educational books.

SPECIALTY STORES

A La Civette is perhaps Paris's most beautiful tobacconists, stocking a vast range of cigars behind specially humidified store windows.

One of the world's most famous and delightful toystores is **Au Nain Bleu** while the name **Cassegrain** is synonymous with high-quality stationery and paper products.

DIRECTORY

SOUVENIR STORES

Les Drapeaux de France
1 pl Colette 75001.
Map 8 E1.
Tel *01 40 20 00 11.*

PERFUME

Annick Goutal
16 rue de Bellechasse 75007.
Map 7 C3.
Tel *01 45 51 36 13.*
One of several branches.

L'Artisan Parfumeur
24 bd Raspail 75007.
Map 12 D1.
Tel *01 42 22 23 32.*
One of several branches.

Eiffel Shopping
9 av de Suffren 75007.
Map 6 D3.
Tel *01 45 66 55 30.*

Guerlain
68 av des Champs-Elysées 75008. **Map** 2 F5.
Tel *01 45 62 52 57.*
www.guerlain.com

Parfums Caron
34 av Montaigne 75008.
Map 6 F1.
Tel *01 47 23 40 82.*

Sephora
70 av des Champs-Elysées 75008. **Map** 7 B1.
Tel *01 53 93 22 50.*
www.sephora.fr
One of several branches.

HOUSEHOLD GOODS

Baccarat
11 pl de la Madeleine 75008. **Map** 3 C5.
Tel *01 42 65 36 26.*

Bô
8 rue St-Mérri 75004. **Map** 9B2. ***Tel*** *01 42 74 55 10.*

La Chaise Longue
30 rue Croix-des-Petits-Champs 75001. **Map** 8 F1.
Tel *01 42 96 32 14.*

Christofle
24 rue de la Paix 75002.
Map 4 D5.
Tel *01 42 65 62 43.*
www.christofle.com

Lalique
11 rue Royale 75008.
Map 3 C5.
Tel *01 53 05 12 12.*

Lumicristal
29 rue de Paradis 75010.
Tel *01 42 46 60 29.*

BOOKS

Brentano's
37 av de l'Opéra 75002.
Map 4 E5. ***Tel*** *01 42 61 52 50.* **www**.brentanos.fr

Gibert Joseph
26 bd St-Michel 75006.
Map 8 F5.
Tel *01 44 41 88 88.*

La Hune
170 bd St-Germain 75006. **Map** 8 D4.
Tel *01 45 48 35 85.*

Red Wheelbarrow Bookstore
22 rue St-Paul 75004.
Map 10 D4.
Tel *01 48 04 75 08.*
www.theredwheelbarrow.com

Shakespeare & Co
37 rue de la Bûcherie 75005.
Map 9 A4.
Tel *01 43 25 40 93.*

W H Smith
248 rue de Rivoli 75001.
Map 7 C1.
Tel *01 44 77 88 99.*

SPECIALTY STORES

A La Civette
157 rue St-Honoré 75001.
Map 8 F2.
Tel *01 42 96 04 99.*

Au Nain Bleu
5 bd Malesherbes 75008.
Map 3 C5.
Tel *01 42 65 20 00.*
www.aunainbleu.com
One of several branches.

Cassegrain
422 rue St-Honoré 75008.
Map 3 C5.
Tel *01 42 60 20 08.*
www.cassegrain.fr.

Food and Drink

Paris is as famous for food as it is for fashion. Gastronomic treats include *foie gras*, cold meats from the *charcuterie*, cheese, and wine. Certain streets are so overflowing with food stores that you can put together a picnic for 20 in no time: try the rue Montorgueil *(see Map 9 A1)*. The rue Rambuteau, running on either side of the Pompidou Center, has a marvelous row of fish stores and delicatessens.

BREAD AND CAKES

There is a vast range of breads and pastries in France's capital. The *baguette* is often translated as "French bread;" a *bâtard* is similar but thicker, while a *ficelle* is thinner. A *fougasse* is a crusty, flat loaf often filled with onions, cheese, herbs, or spices.

Croissants can be bought *ordinaire* or *au beurre* – the latter is flakier and more buttery. *Pain au chocolat* is a chocolate-filled pastry eaten for breakfast, and *chausson aux pommes* is filled with apples. There are also pear, plum, and rhubarb variations. A *pain aux raisins* is a bread-like wheel filled with custard and raisins.

Poilâne sells perhaps the only bread in Paris known by the name of its baker (the late Lionel, brother of Max) and his hearty wholewheat loaves are tremendously popular.

Many think **Ganachaud** bakes the best bread in Paris. Thirty different kinds, including ingredients such as walnuts and fruit, are made in the old-fashioned ovens.

Les Panetons is a good chain bakery. Favorites here include five-grain bread, sesame rolls, and *mouchoir aux pommes*, a variation on the traditional *chausson*.

Many of the Jewish delicatessens have the best ryes and the only pumpernickels in town. One of the best is **Sacha Finkelsztajn**.

Le Moulin de la Vierge uses a wood fire to bake organic breads and rich pound cakes. **J L Poujauran** is known for his black-olive bread and nut-and-raisin wholegrain breads.

Pierre Hermé is to cakes what Chanel is to fashion, while **Ladurée**'s macaroons are legendary.

CHOCOLATE

Like all food in France, chocolate is to be savored. **Christian Constant's** low-sugar creations are made with pure cocoa and are known to connoisseurs. **Dalloyau** makes all types of chocolate and is not too expensive (it is also known for its pâtisserie and cold meats). **Fauchon** is world famous for its luxury food products. Its chocolates are excellent, as is the pâtisserie. Robert Linxe at **La Maison du Chocolat** is constantly inventing fresh, rich chocolates with mouth-watering exotic ingredients. **Richart** boasts beautifully presented and hugely expensive chocolates, which are usually coated with dark chocolate or liqueur-filled.

CHARCUTERIE AND FOIE GRAS

Charcuteries often sell cheese, snails, truffles, smoked salmon, caviar, and wine as well as cold meats. **Fauchon** has a good grocery, as does the department store **Le Bon Marché**. **Hédiard** is a luxury store similar to Fauchon, and **Maison de la Truffe** sells *foie gras* and sausages as well as truffles. For Beluga caviar, Georgian tea, and Russian vodka, go to **Petrossian**.

The Lyon and Auvergne regions of France are the best known for their *charcuterie*, and **Chrétienne Jean-Jacques** sells excellent examples. **Maison Pou** is a sparklingly clean and popular store selling *pâté en croute* (pâté baked in pastry), *boudins* (black and white puddings), Lyonnais sausages, ham, and *foie gras*. Just off the Champs-Elysées, **Vignon** has superb *foie gras* and Lyonnais sausages as well as popular prepared food.

Together with truffles and caviar, *foie gras* is the ultimate in gourmet food. Though most specialty food stores sell *foie gras*, you can be sure of quality at **Comtesse du Barry**, which has six outlets in Paris. **Divay** is relatively inexpensive and will ship overseas. **Labeyrie** has a range of beautifully packaged *foie gras* suitable for giving as presents.

CHEESE

Although camembert is undoubtedly a favorite, there is an overwhelming range of cheeses available and a friendly *fromager* will always help you choose. **Marie-Anne Cantin** is one of the leading figures in the fight to protect traditional production methods, and her fine cheeses are available from the store that she inherited from her father. Some say that **Alléosse** is the best cheese delicatessen in Paris – all the cheeses are made according to traditional methods. **Crèmerie Quatrehomme** sells farm-made cheeses, many of which are in danger of becoming extinct; these include a rare and delicious truffle Brie (when in season). **Le Jardin Fromager** is one of the best stores in Paris for all types of cheese – the *chèvre* (goat's cheese) is particularly good, as are the *camemberts au lait cru* (cheese made with unpasteurized milk), which ooze over the plate. **Barthélémy** in the rue de Grenelle has a truly exceptional Roquefort. **Androuët** is a Parisian institution with several branches across the city. Try a pungent Munster or a really ripe Brie. A charming cheese store, **La Fermette**, offers a dazzling array of dairy products, which the staff will encase in plastic for the journey home, imperative when bringing cheese through customs.

Well-heeled locals line up in the street to buy oozing *livarot* and sharp *chèvre* from **La Fromagerie d'Auteuil**.

WINE

The chain store which has practically cornered the everyday tippling market is **Nicolas** – there is a branch in every neighborhood with a range of wines to suit all pockets. As a rule, the salespeople are knowledgeable and helpful. Try the charming **Legrand Filles et Fils** for a carefully chosen selection of high-end champagnes. **Caves Taillevent** on the rue du Faubourg-St-Honoré is worth a sightseeing tour. It is an enormous, overwhelming cellar with some of the most expensive wine.

Cave Péret on the rue Daguerre has a vast selection of wines and can offer personal advice to help you with your purchase. The beautiful **Ryst-Dupeyron**, in the St-Germain quarter, displays whiskies, wines, ports, and Monsieur Ryst's own Armagnac. He will even personalize a bottle for that special occasion.

Other great wine stores include **Lavinia**, which is the largest in Europe, and, by contrast, **Renaud Michel** at Place de la Nation, whose small boutique is very well stocked and well connected. The staff in **Les Caves Augé** are also very knowledgeable and friendly.

DIRECTORY

BREAD AND CAKES

Ganachaud
226 rue des Pyrénées 75020. **Tel** *01 43 58 42 62.*

J L Poujauran
20 rue Jean-Nicot 75007. **Map** 6 F2. **Tel** *01 43 17 35 20.*

Ladurée
75 av des Champs-Elysées 75008. **Map** 2 F5. **Tel** *01 40 75 08 75.*

Le Moulin de la Vierge
105 rue Vercingétorix 75014. **Map** 11 A4. **Tel** *01 45 43 09 84.*

Les Panetons
113 rue Mouffetard 75005. **Map** 13 B2. **Tel** *01 47 07 12 08.*

Pierre Hermé
72 rue Bonaparte 75006. **Map** 8 E4. **Tel** *01 43 54 47 77.*

Poilâne
8 rue du Cherche-Midi 75006. **Map** 8 D4. **Tel** *01 45 48 42 59.*

Sacha Finkelsztajn
27 rue des Rosiers 75004. **Map** 9 C3. **Tel** *01 42 72 78 91*

CHOCOLATE

Christian Constant
37 rue d'Assas 75006. **Map** 12 E1. **Tel** *01 53 63 15 15.*

Dalloyau
101rue du Faubourg-St-Honoré 75008. **Map** 3 B5. **Tel** *01 42 99 90 00.*

Fauchon
26 pl de la Madeleine 75008. **Map** 3 C5. **Tel** *01 70 39 38 00.*

La Maison du Chocolat
225 rue du Faubourg-St-Honoré 75008. **Map** 2 E3. **Tel** *01 42 27 39 44.*

Richart
258 bd St-Germain 75007. **Map** 7 C2. **Tel** *01 45 55 66 00.*

CHARCUTERIE AND FOIE GRAS

Chrétienne Jean-Jacques
58 rue des Martyrs 75009. **Map** 4 F2. **Tel** *01 48 78 96 45.*

Comtesse du Barry
1 rue de Sèvres 75006. **Map** 8 D4. **Tel** *01 45 48 32 04.*

Divay
4 rue Bayen 75017. **Map** 2 D2. **Tel** *01 43 80 16 97.*

Hédiard
21 pl de la Madeleine 75008. **Map** C5. **Tel** *01 43 12 88 88.*

Labeyrie
11 rue d'Auteuil 75016. **Map** 5 A5. **Tel** *01 42 24 17 62.*

Le Bon Marché
24 rue de Sèvres 75007. **Map** 7 C5. **Tel** *01 44 39 80 00.*

Maison de la Truffe
19 pl de la Madeleine 75008. **Map** 3 C5. **Tel** *01 42 65 53 22.*

Maison Pou
16 av des Ternes 75017. **Map** 2 D3. **Tel** *01 43 80 19 24.*

Petrossian
18 bd Latour-Maubourg 75007. **Map** 7 A2. **Tel** *01 44 11 32 22.*

Vignon
14 rue Marbeuf 75008. **Map** 2 F5. **Tel** *01 47 20 24 26.*

CHEESE

Alléosse
13 rue Poncelet 75017. **Map** 2 E3. **Tel** *01 46 22 50 45.*

Androuët
134 rue Mouffetard 75005. **Map** 13 B1. **Tel** *01 45 87 85 05.*

Barthélémy
51 rue de Grenelle 75007. **Map** 8 D4. **Tel** *01 45 48 56 75.*

Crèmerie Quatrehomme
62 rue de Sèvres 75007. **Map** 7 C5. **Tel** *01 47 34 33 45.*

La Fermette
86 rue Montorgeuil 75002. **Map** 9 A1. **Tel** *01 42 36 70 96.*

La Fromagerie d'Auteuil
58 rue d'Auteuil 75016. **Map** 5 A5. **Tel** *01 45 25 07 10.*

Le Jardin Fromager
53 rue Oberkampf 75011. **Map** 10 E1. **Tel** *01 48 05 19 96.*

Marie-Anne Cantin
12 rue du Champ-de-Mars 75007. **Map** 6 F3. **Tel** *01 45 50 43 94.*

WINE

Les Caves Augé
116 bd Haussman 75008. **Map** 3 C4. **Tel** *01 45 22 16 97.*

Cave Péret
6 rue Daguerre 75014. **Map** 12 D4. **Tel** *01 43 22 08 64.*

Caves Taillevent
199 rue du Faubourg-St-Honoré 75008. **Map** 2 F3. **Tel** *01 45 61 14 09.*

Lavinia
3–5 bd de la Madeleine 75008. **Map** 4 D5. **Tel** *01 42 97 20 20*

Legrand Filles et Fils
1 rue de la Banque 75002. **Map** 8 F1. **Tel** *01 42 60 07 12.*

Nicolas
35 bd Malesherbes 75008. **Map** 3 C5. **Tel** *01 42 65 00 85.*

Renaud Michel
12 pl de la Nation 75012. **Tel** *01 43 07 98 93.*

Ryst-Dupeyron
79 rue du Bac 75007. **Map** 8 D3. **Tel** *01 45 48 80 93.*

Arts and Antiques

In Paris you can either buy art and antiques from stores and galleries with established reputations, or from flea markets and avant-garde galleries. Many of the prestigious antiques stores and galleries are located around the rue du Faubourg-St-Honoré and are worth a visit even if you can't afford to buy. On the Left Bank is Le Carré Rive Gauche, an organization of 30 antiques dealers.

EXPORTING

Objets d'art over 50 years old, worth more than a given amount, will require a *Certificat pour un bien culturel* to be exported (provided by the vendor), plus a *licence d'exportation* for non-EU countries. Seek professional advice from the large antique stores. The **Centre des Renseignements des Douanes** has a booklet, *Bulletin Officiel des Douanes*, with all the details.

ANTIQUES

If you wish to buy antiques, you might like to stroll around the areas that boast the most galleries – in Le Carré Rive Gauche around quai Malaquais, try **L'Arc en Seine** and **Anne-Sophie Duval** for Art Nouveau and Art Deco. Rue Jacob is still one of the best places to seek beautiful objects, antique or modern. Close to the Louvre, the **Louvre des Antiquaires** comprises 250 stores selling mainly expensive, quality furniture. Many of the prestigious antiques stores are are near rue du Faubourg-St-Honoré including **Didier Aaron**, expert on furniture from the 17th and 18th centuries. **Village St-Paul** is the most charming group of antiques shops and is also open on Sundays. In the south of the city, **Le Village Suisse** also groups many art and antiques dealers.

ART GALLERIES

Established art galleries are located on or around the avenue Montaigne. The **Louise Leiris** gallery was founded by D.H. Kahnweiler, the dealer who "discovered" both Georges Braque and Pablo Picasso. The gallery still shows Cubist masterpieces.

On the Left Bank **Galerie Maeght** has a tremendous stock of paintings at prices to suit most budgets; he also publishes fine art books.

Rue Louise-Weiss, known as Scène Est, has become the area for cutting-edge creativity and innovation. The **Air de Paris** gallery is popular.

In the Marais try **Yvon Lambert** and **Galerie du Jour Agnès B**, in the Bastille, **Lavignes-Bastille** and **L et M Durand-Dessert**, also a fashionable place to buy catalogs on new artists, if not their works.

AUCTION HOUSES

The great Paris auction center, in operation since 1858, is **Drouot-Richelieu**. Bidding can be intimidating since most of it is done by dealers. Beware of the auctioneer's high-speed patter. *La Gazette de L'Hôtel Drouot* tells you which auctions are coming up when. Drouot-Richelieu also has its own auction catalog. The house only accepts cash and French checks, but there is an exchange desk in-house. A 10–15 percent commission to the house is charged, so remember to add it onto any price you hear. You may view from 11am–6pm on the day before the sale, and from 11am to noon on the morning of the sale.

DIRECTORY

EXPORTING

Centre des Renseignements des Douanes
Tel *08 11 20 44 44.*
www.douane.gouv.fr

ANTIQUES

Anne-Sophie Duval
5 quai Malaquais 75006.
Map 8 E3.
Tel *01 43 54 51 16.*
www.annesophieduval.com

L'Arc en Seine
31 rue de Seine 75006.
Map 8 E3.
Tel *01 43 29 11 02.*

Didier Aaron
118 rue du Faubourg-St-Honoré 75008. **Map** 3 C5.
Tel *01 47 42 47 34.*
www.didieraaron-cie.com

Louvre des Antiquaires
2 pl du Palais Royal 75001.
Map 8 E2.
Tel *01 42 97 27 27.*

Village St-Paul
Between the quai des Célestins, the rue St-Paul and the rue Charlemagne 75004. **Map** 9 C4.

Le Village Suisse
78 av de Suffren 75015.
Map 6 E4.
www.levillagesuisseparis.com

ART GALLERIES

Air de Paris
32 rue Louise-Weiss 75013. **Map** 14 E4.
Tel *01 44 23 02 77.*

Galerie du Jour Agnès B
44 rue Quincampoix 75004. **Map** 9 B2.
Tel *01 44 54 55 90.*

Galerie Maeght
42 rue du Bac 75007.
Map 8 D3.
Tel *01 45 48 45 15.*

L et M Durand-Dessert
28 rue de Lappe 75011.
Map 10 F4.
Tel *01 48 06 92 23.*

Lavignes-Bastille
27 rue de Charonne 75011. **Map** 10 F4.
Tel *01 47 00 88 18.*

Louise Leiris
47 rue de Monceau 75008. **Map** 3 A3.
Tel *01 45 63 28 85.*

Yvon Lambert
108 rue Vieille-du-Temple 75003. **Map** 10 D2.
Tel *01 42 71 09 33.*

AUCTION HOUSES

Drouot-Richelieu
9 rue Drouot 75009.
Map 4 F4.
Tel *01 48 00 20 20.*
www.drouot.fr

Markets

For eye-catching displays of wonderful food or a lively shopping atmosphere, there is no better place than a Paris market. There are large covered food markets, markets where stalls change regularly, and permanent street markets. Some of the more famous markets, with approximate opening times, follows. While you are enjoying browsing round the stalls, remember to keep an eye on your money and be prepared to bargain.

FOOD MARKETS

The French still shop daily, hence food markets are always packed. Most fruit and vegetable markets are open from around 8am–1pm and from 4–7pm Tuesday to Saturday, and from 9am–1pm Sunday. Watch out for rotten produce – buy produce loose, not in boxes. A little language is useful for specifying *pas trop mûr* (not too ripe), or *pour manger ce soir* (to be eaten tonight).

FLEA MARKETS

It is often said that you can no longer find bargains at the Paris flea markets. Though this may be true, it is still worth going to one for the sheer fun of browsing. Whether you pick up any real bargains has as much to do with luck as with judgement. Often the sellers themselves have little or no idea of the true value of their goods – which can work either for or against you. The biggest and most famous market, incorporating several smaller ones, is the Marché aux Puces de St-Ouen. Keep an eye on your wallet, as pickpockets frequent these markets.

Marché d'Aligre

Pl d'Aligre 75012. **Map** 10 F5. M *Ledru-Rollin.* ○ *9am–1pm & 4–7:30pm Tue–Sat, 9am–1:30pm Sun.*

Reminiscent of a Moroccan bazaar, this must be the cheapest and liveliest market in the city. Here traders hawk ingredients such as North African olives, groundnuts, and hot peppers, and there are even a few halal butchers. Stalls on the square sell mostly second-hand clothes and bric-a-brac. This is a less affluent area of town with few tourists and many Parisians.

Marché Enfant Rouges

39 rue de Bretagne 75003. **Map** 10 D2. M *Temple, Filles-du-Calvaire.* ○ *8:30am–1pm, 4–7pm Tue–Sat (until 8pm Fri, Sat), 8:30am–2pm Sun.*

This part-covered fruit and vegetable market dates from 1620. Famous for the freshness of its produce, on Sunday mornings street singers and accordionists help enliven the proceedings. There are also plenty of cheap eateries here.

Marché Raspail

75006. **Map** 8 D4. M *Rennes.* ○ *7am–2:30pm Tue & Fri, 9am–3pm Sun.*

Conveniently situated between Montparnasse and St-Germain, Raspail market sells fresh produce during the week and organic only produce on Sundays.

Marché St-Germain

4–8 rue Lobineau 75006. **Map** 8 E4. M *Mabillon.* ○ *8am–1pm, 4–8pm Tue–Sat, 8am–1:30pm Sun.*

St-Germain is one of the few covered markets left in Paris. Here you can buy Italian, Mexican, Greek, Asian, and organic produce.

Rue Montorgueil

75001 & 75002. **Map** 9 A1. M *Les Halles.* ○ *9am–7pm daily (subject to change).*

The paved rue Montorgueil is what remains of the old Les Halles market. Here you can buy exotic fruit and vegetables like green bananas and yams, or sample offerings from the delicatessens. Expect high prices.

Rue Mouffetard

75005. **Map** 13 B2. M *Pl Monge.* ○ *8am–1pm Tue–Sun.*

This is one of the oldest market streets in Paris, and although it has become touristy it is still a charming winding street full of quality food. There is also a lively African market down the nearby side street of rue Daubenton.

Rue Poncelet

75017. **Map** 2 E3. M *Ternes.* ○ *8am–noon, 4–7:30pm Tue–Sat, 8am–12:30pm Sun.*

Situated away from the main tourist areas, this market street is worth visiting for its authentic French atmosphere. Choose from many bakeries, pâtisseries, and *charcuteries.*

Marché de la Porte de Vanves

Av Georges-Lafenestre & av Marc-Sangnier 75014. M *Porte-de-Vanves.* ○ *7am–3 or 5pm, & 7am–5pm Sat & Sun respectively.*

Porte de Vanves is a small market selling good-quality bric-a-brac and junk as well as some second-hand furniture. It's best to get to the market early on Saturday morning for the best choice of wares. Artists exhibit nearby.

Marché aux Puces de Montreuil

Porte de Montreuil, 93 Montreuil 75020. M *Porte-de-Montreuil.* ○ *8am–6pm Sat, Sun & Mon.*

Go early to the Porte de Montreuil flea market, where you'll have a better chance of picking up a bargain. The substantial second-hand clothes section attracts many young people. Stalls sell everything from used bicycles to bric-à-brac and exotic spices.

Marché aux Puces de St-Ouen

(see p134.)

This is the most well known, the most crowded, and the most expensive of all the flea markets. Here you'll find a range of markets, locals dealing from their car trunks, and a number of large buildings packed with stalls. Some of them are very upmarket; others sell junk. A *Guide des Puces* (guide to the flea markets) can be obtained from the information kiosk in the Marché Biron on the rue des Rosiers.

Rue de Seine and Rue de Buci

75006. **Map** 8 E4. M *Odéon.* ○ *8am–1pm, 4–7pm Tue–Sat, 9am–1pm Sun.*

The stalls here are expensive and crowded but sell quality fruit and vegetables. There is also a large flower shop and two excellent pâtisseries.

ENTERTAINMENT IN PARIS

Whether your preference is for classical drama, avant-garde theater, ballet, opera or jazz, cinema, or dancing the night away, Paris has it all. There is plenty of free entertainment, too, from the street performers outside the Pompidou Center to musicians busking all over town and in the metros.

Parisians themselves like nothing better than strolling along the boulevards or sitting at a sidewalk café nursing a drink as they watch the world go by. If, however, you're looking for the ultimate "Oh la-la!" experience, you can visit any of the celebrated nightclubs.

Spectator sports fans have tennis, the Tour de France, or horse racing. Recreation centers and gyms cater to the more active. And for those disposed to more leisurely pursuits, there is always a quiet game of boules to be played in the park.

The glass façade of the Bastille Opéra

BUYING TICKETS

Depending on the event, tickets can often be bought at the door, but for popular events it is wiser to purchase tickets in advance at the **FNAC** chains or **Virgin Megastore**. Theater box offices open daily from about 11am–7pm. Most accept credit card reservations by telephone.

THEATER

From the grandeur of the **Comédie Française** to slapstick farce and avant-garde drama, theater is flourishing, both in Paris and in its suburbs. Founded in 1680 by royal decree, the Comédie Française is the bastion of French theater, aiming to keep classical drama in the public eye and to perform works by the best modern playwrights. Formerly the second theater of the Comédie Française, the **Odéon Théâtre de l'Europe** now specializes in plays from other countries, performed in their original language. In an underground auditorium in the Art Deco Palais de Chaillot, the **Théâtre National de Chaillot** is famed for staging some very lively productions of European classics. The **Théâtre National de la Colline** specializes in contemporary drama.

Among the most important of the serious independents is the **Comédie des Champs-Elysées**, while for over 100 years the **Palais Royal** has been known as the temple of risqué farce. The café theaters such as **Théâtre d'Edgar** and **Le Point Virgule** are always good venues for seeing the best of the emerging new talent.

In the summer, street theater thrives in tourist areas such as the Pompidou Center, Les Halles, and St-Germain-des-Prés. Open-air performances of Shakespeare and classic French plays are given at the Shakespeare Garden in the Bois de Boulogne.

CLASSICAL MUSIC

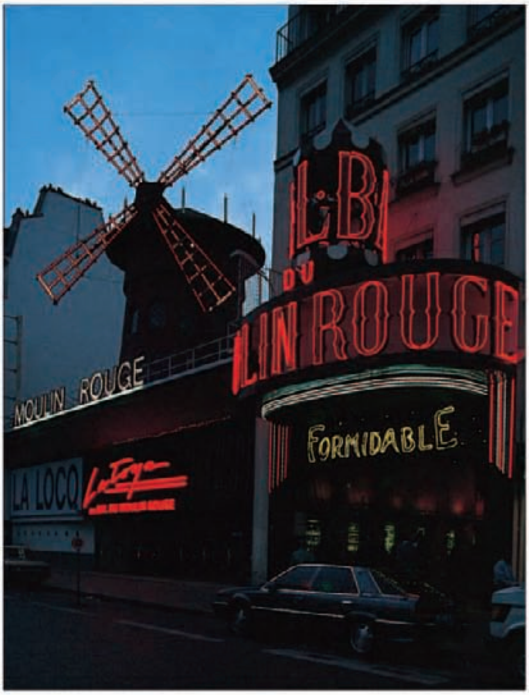
Paris has many first-class venues with an excellent range of opera, classical, and contemporary music productions. Opened in 1989, the stylish, 2,700-seat **Opéra National de Paris Bastille** stages classic and modern operas. The beautifully renovated **Opéra National Garnier** puts on mostly ballets.

The **Salle Pleyel** is Paris's principal concert hall, housing the Orchestre de Paris and Radio France's Philharmonic Orchestra. Both the **Théâtre des Champs-Elysées** and the **Théâtre du Châtelet** are recommended for their varied high-quality programs. Venues for chamber music include the **Salle Gaveau** and the **Théâtre de la Ville**. The **Cité**

LISTINGS MAGAZINES

Pariscope, Zurban, and *L'Officiel des Spectacles* are the best listings magazines in Paris. Published every Wednesday, you can pick them up at any newsstand. *Le Figaro* also has a good listings section on Wednesdays. *The City* is published quarterly in English, and is available at news-stands or W H Smith *(see p145).*

Pariscop
l'officiel des spectacles
POUR UN INSTANT LA LIBERTÉ



The famous silhouette of the Moulin Rouge nightclub

de la Musique in the Parc de la Villette is one of Paris' most vibrant concert halls. The venue is renowned for its eclectic music programs and workshops, while the museum charts the history of music, and exhibits over 4,000 instruments.

DANCE

The French are very vocal in their appreciation or dislike of dance, and those who fail to please are subjected to boos, hisses, and mass walk-outs in mid-performance.

The opulent **Opéra National Garnier** has space for 450 artists and is home to the Ballet de l'Opéra de Paris, which has earned a reputation as one of the best classical ballet companies in the world. Government support has helped the **Théâtre de la Ville** to become Paris's most important venue for modern dance, with subsidies keeping ticket costs relatively low.

The **Maison des Arts de Créteil** stages famous overseas companies, as well as its own much praised productions.

CLUBS AND CABARET

Music in Paris clubs tends to follow the trends set in the U.S. and Britain. Only a few clubs such as **Balajo**, once frequented by Edith Piaf, and the ultrahip **Showcase**, under the Alexandre III bridge, are genuinely up-to-the-minute with their music.

La Locomotive attracts a mixed crowd to its three-level mainstream house nights. **Les Bains** is the old standby nightspot attracting fashion and show business people. For comedy in English, try **La Java**. The stage of this club, where Edith Piaf once performed, now showcases British and American comedians.

When it comes to picking a cabaret, the rule of thumb is simple: the better known places are best. The **Folies-Bergère** is the oldest music hall in Paris and probably the most famous in the world. It is closely rivaled by the **Lido** and the **Moulin Rouge**, birthplace of the cancan. **Paradis Latin** is the most "French" cabaret in the city. It shows variety acts whose sketches are enlivened by remarkable special effects and scenery.

ROCK, JAZZ AND WORLD MUSIC

The top international acts are usually to be found at the enormous arenas such as **Palais Omnisports Paris-Bercy** or the **Zénith**. For a more intimate atmosphere, the legendary **Olympia** has assigned seating and good acoustics. To hear indigenous rock groups like Les Negresses Vertes and Mano Negra go to **La Cigale** or **Elysée-Montmartre** in the Pigalle area.

Jazz-crazy Paris has innumerable packed clubs where the best talent in the world can be heard on any evening. All the great jazz musicians have performed at **New Morning**, which also hosts African, Brazilian, and other sounds. For Dixieland go to **Le Petit Journal St-Michel**.

World music and jazz lovers alike can see top acts and dance until dawn at the excellent **Chapelle des Lombards**.

The spectacular façade of the Opéra National Garnier

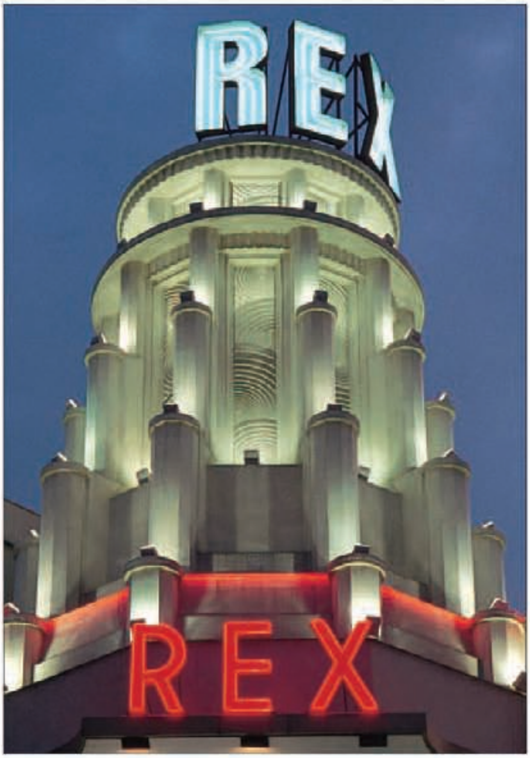
MOVIES

Paris is the world's capital of film appreciation. It was the cradle of the cinematograph nearly 100 years ago. Then in the late 1950s and early 1960s the city nurtured that very Parisian vanguard movement, the New Wave, when movie directors such as François Truffaut and Jean-Luc Godard revolutionized the way movies were made and perceived.

There are now more than 370 screens within the city limits, distributed among over 100 movie theaters. Most are concentrated in cinema belts, which enjoy the added appeal of nearby restaurants and stores. The Champs-Elysées has the densest movie theater strip in town, where you can see the latest Hollywood smash or French *auteur* triumph, as well as some classic re-issues.

In the vicinity of the Opéra de Paris Garnier, the theaters in the Grands Boulevards include two notable landmarks: the 2,800-seat **Le Grand Rex**, with its Baroque decor, and the **Max Linder Panorama**, which was completely refurbished in the 1980s. The place de Clichy is the last Parisian stronghold of Pathé, while the hub of Right Bank cinema is in the Forum des Halles mall. France's largest screen is at **La Géode**.

On the Left Bank, Odéon-St-Germain-des-Prés has taken over from the Latin Quarter as the city's heartland for art and repertory movie theaters. The huge **MK2 Bibliothèque** points to the future with its collection of 14 screens, a bar, stores, and exhibition space.



The dome of the 2,800-seat Le Grand Rex movie theater

SPORTS

Paris is host to some of the foremost sporting events in the world. City-wide frenzy sweeps Paris when the Tour de France bicycle race finishes there in July. From late May to mid-June Parisians live and breathe tennis during the **Roland Garros** national tennis championship. The Prix de l'Arc de Triomphe, held at the **Hippodrome de Longchamp** on the first Sunday in October, provides the opportunity to see the rich in all their finery as well as first-class flat racing.

The **Palais Omnisports Paris-Bercy** is the venue for a vast range of events, including the Paris tennis open, and rock concerts, as is the new **Stade de France** at St-Denis. **Parc des Princes** is home to Paris's top football team, Paris St-Germain.

THE CELEBRATED CAFES OF PARIS

One of the most enduring images of Paris is the Left Bank café scene where great artists, writers, and eminent intellectuals consorted. Before World War I, hordes of Russian revolutionaries, including Lenin and Trotsky, whiled away their days in the Rotonde and the Dôme in Montparnasse. In the 1920s, Surrealists dominated café life. Later came the American writers led by Ernest Hemingway and F. Scott Fitzgerald, whose haunts included La Coupole. After World War II, Jean-Paul Sartre and other Existentialists shifted the cultural scene northward to St-Germain.

Newspaper reading remains a typical café pastime

DIRECTORY

BUYING TICKETS

FNAC
26 av des Ternes 75017. **Map** 2 D3. ***Tel*** *08 25 02 00 20.* Forum Les Halles, 1 rue Pierre Lescot 75001. **Map** 9 A2. ***Tel*** *08 25 02 00 20.* **www**.fnac.com

Virgin Megastore
52–60 av des Champs-Elysées 75008. **Map** 2 F5. ***Tel*** *01 49 53 50 00.* **www**.virginmegastore.fr

THEATER

Comédie des Champs-Elysées
15 av Montaigne 75008. **Map** 6 F1. ***Tel*** *01 53 23 99 19.*

Comédie Française
1 pl Colette 75001. **Map** 8 E1. ***Tel*** *08 25 10 16 80.* **www**.comedie-francaise.fr

Odéon Théâtre de l’Europe
Ateliers Berthier, 8 bd Berthier 75017. **Map** 4 D1. ***Tel*** *01 44 85 40 40.* **www**.theatre-odeon.fr

Palais Royal
38 rue Montpensier 75001. **Map** 8 E1. ***Tel*** *01 42 97 40 00.*

Le Point Virgule
7 rue Ste-Croix de la Bretonnerie 75004. **Map** 9 C3. ***Tel*** *01 42 78 67 03.*

Théâtre d’Edgar
58 bd Edgar-Quinet 75014. **Map** 12 D2. ***Tel*** *01 42 79 97 97.*

Théâtre National de Chaillot
Pl du Trocadéro 75016. **Map** 5 C2. ***Tel*** *01 53 65 30 00.*

Théâtre National de la Colline
15 rue Malte-Brun 75020. ***Tel*** *01 44 62 52 52.*

CLASSICAL MUSIC

Cité de la Musique
221 av Jean-Jaurès 75019. ***Tel*** *01 44 84 44 84.* **www**.cite-musique.fr

Opéra National de Paris Bastille
120 rue de Lyon 75012. **Map** 10 E4. ***Tel*** *08 92 89 90 90.* **www**.operadeparis.fr

Opéra National de Paris Garnier
Pl de l’Opera 75009. **Map** 4 E5. ***Tel*** *08 92 89 90 90.*

Salle Gaveau
45 rue la Boétie 75008. **Map** 3 B4. ***Tel*** *01 49 53 05 07.* **www**.sallegaveau.com

Salle Pleyel
252 rue du Faubourg St-Honoré 75008. **Map** 2 E3. ***Tel*** *01 42 56 13 13* **www**.sallepleyel.fr

Théâtre des Champs-Elysées
15 av Montaigne 75008. **Map** 6 F1. ***Tel*** *01 49 52 50 00.* **www**.theatredeschampselysees.fr

Théâtre du Châtelet
Pl du Châtelet 75001. **Map** 9 A3. ***Tel*** *01 40 28 28 40.* **www**.chatelet-theatre.com

Théâtre de la Ville
2 pl du Châtelet 75004. **Map** 9 A3. ***Tel*** *01 42 74 22 77.* **www**.theatredelaville-paris.com

DANCE

Maison des Arts de Créteil
Pl Salvador Allende 94000 Créteil. ***Tel*** *01 45 13 19 19.* **www**.maccreteil.com

Opéra Garnier
(See Classical Music.)

Théâtre de la Ville
(See Classical Music.)

CLUBS AND CABARET

Les Bains
7 rue du Bourg-L’Abbé 75003. **Map** 9 B1. ***Tel*** *01 53 01 40 60.*

Balajo
9 rue de Lappe 75011. **Map** 10 E4. ***Tel*** *09 54 94 54 09.* **www**.balajo.fr

Folies-Bergère
32 rue Richer 75009. ***Tel*** *08 92 68 16 50.* **www**.foliesbergere.com

La Java
105 rue du Faubourg-du-Temple 75010. ***Tel*** *01 42 02 20 52.*

La Locomotive
90 bd de Clichy 75018. **Map** 4 D1. ***Tel*** *01 56 55 52 04.*

Lido
116 bis av des Champs-Elysées 75008. **Map** 2 E4. ***Tel*** *01 40 76 56 10.* **www**.lido.fr

Moulin Rouge
82 bd de Clichy 75018. **Map** 4 E1. ***Tel*** *01 53 09 82 82.* **www**.moulinrouge.fr

Paradis Latin
28 rue du Cardinal-Lemoine 75005. **Map** 9 B5. ***Tel*** *01 43 25 28 28.*

Showcase
Porte des Champs-Elysées 75007. **Map** 7 A1. ***Tel*** *01 45 61 09 76.* **www**.showcase.fr

ROCK, JAZZ, AND WORLD MUSIC

Chapelle des Lombards
19 rue de Lappe 75011. **Map** 10 F4. ***Tel*** *01 43 57 24 24.*

La Cigale
120 bd Rochechouart 75018. **Map** 4 F2. ***Tel*** *01 49 25 89 99.*

Elysée-Montmartre
72 bd Rochechouart 75018. **Map** 4 F2. ***Tel*** *01 44 92 45 36.*

New Morning
7–9 rue des Petites-Ecuries 75010. ***Tel*** *01 45 23 51 41.*

Olympia
28 bd des Capucines 75009. **Map** 4 D5. ***Tel*** *08 92 68 33 68.* **www**.olympiahall.com

Palais Omnisports Paris-Bercy
8 bd de Bercy 75012. **Map** 14 F2. ***Tel*** *08 92 39 04 90.* **www**.ticketnet.fr

Le Petit Journal St-Michel
71 bd St-Michel 75005. **Map** 12 F1. ***Tel*** *01 43 26 28 59.*

Zénith
211 av de Jean-Jaurès 75019. ***Tel*** *08 90 71 02 07.* **www**.le-zenith.com

MOVIES

La Géode
26 av Corentin-Cariou 75019. ☎ *08 92 68 45 40.*

Le Grand Rex
1 bd Poissonnière 75002. ☎ *08 92 68 05 96.* **www**.legrandrex.com

Max Linder Panorama
24 bd Poissonnière 75009. ☎ *08 92 68 00 31.*

MK2 Bibliothèque
128–162 av de France 75013. ☎ *08 92 69 84 84.* **www**.mk2.com

SPORTS

Hippodrome de Longchamp
Bois de Boulogne 75016. ***Tel*** *01 44 30 75 00.*

Palais Omnisports Paris-Bercy
(see Rock section)

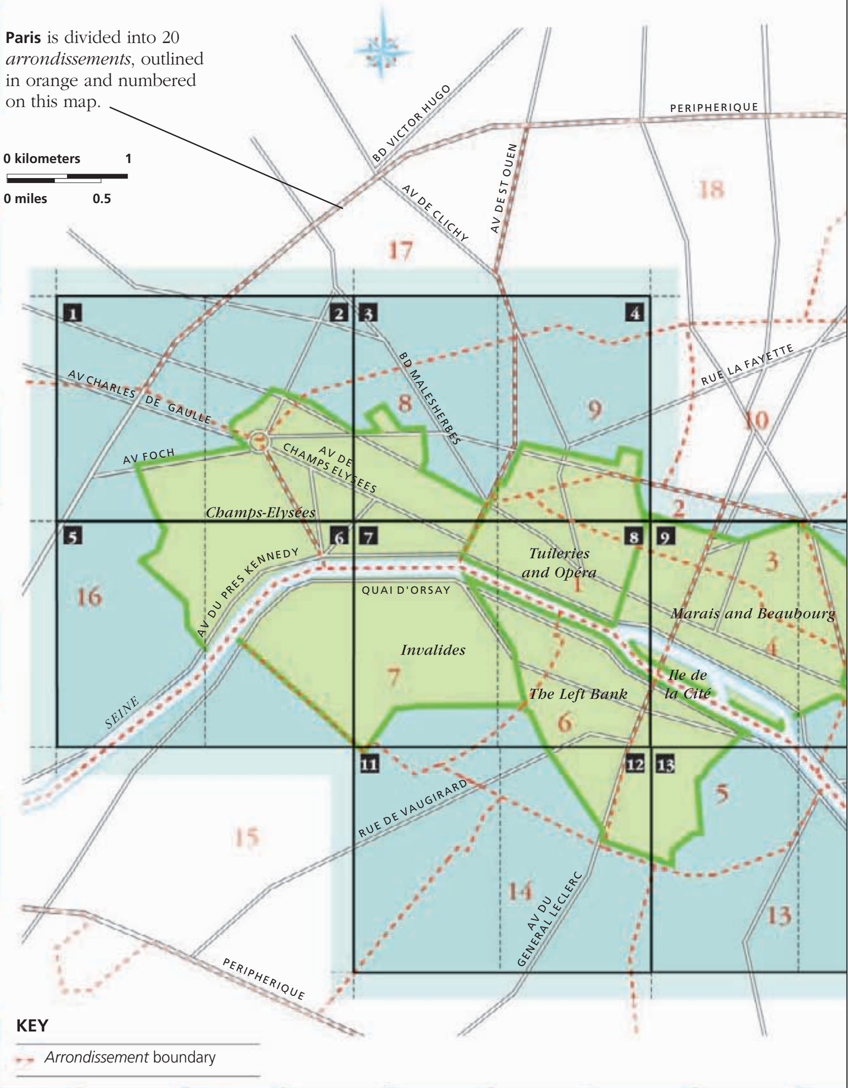
Stade de France
93210 La Plaine St-Denis ***Tel*** *08 92 70 09 00.* **www**.stadedefrance.fr

Parc des Princes
24 rue du Commandant-Guilbaud 75016. ***Tel*** *3275.*

Stade Roland Garros
2 av Gordon-Bennett 75016. ***Tel*** *01 47 43 48 00.* **www**.fft.fr

PARIS STREET FINDER

The map references given with sights, stores, and entertainment venues described in the Paris section of the guide refer to the maps on the following pages. Map references are also given for Paris hotels *(see pp550–5)* and restaurants *(pp600–6)*, and for useful addresses in the *Travelers' Needs* and *Survival Guide* sections at the back of the book. The maps include not only the main sightseeing areas but also the most important districts for hotels, restaurants, shopping, and entertainment venues. The key map below shows the area of Paris covered by the *Street Finder*, with the *arrondissement* numbers for the various districts. The symbols used for sights and other features on the *Street Finder* maps are listed opposite.



Paris is divided into 20 *arrondissements*, outlined in orange and numbered on this map.

0 kilometers 1
0 miles 0.5
BD VICTOR HUGO
PERIPHERIQUE
AV DE ST OUEN
AV DE CLICHY
18
17
1
2
3
4
RUE LA FAYETTE
BD MALESHERBES
8
9
AV CHARLES DE GAULLE
10
AV FOCH
AV DE CHAMPS ELYSEES
Champs-Elysées
2
5
6
7
8
9
3
Tuileries and Opéra
1
AV DU PRES KENNEDY
QUAI D'ORSAY
16
Marais and Beaubourg
4
Invalides
7
Ile de la Cité
The Left Bank
6
SEINE
11
12
13
5
RUE DE VAUGIRARD
15
14
AV DU GENERAL LECLERC
13
PERIPHERIQUE

KEY

Arrondissement boundary

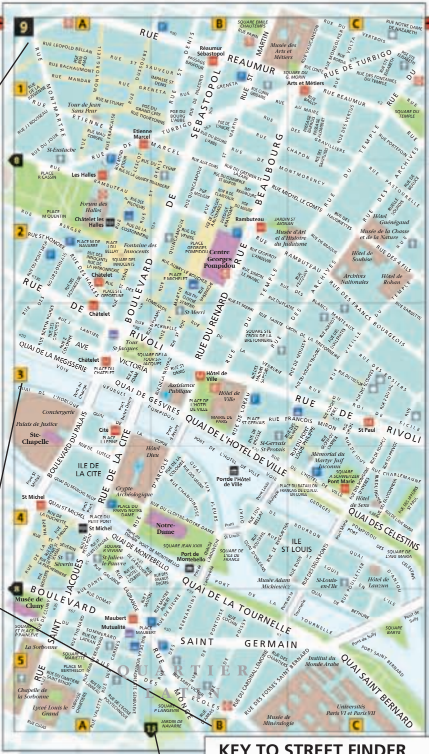
HOW THE MAP REFERENCES WORK

The first figure tells you which *Street Finder* map to turn to.

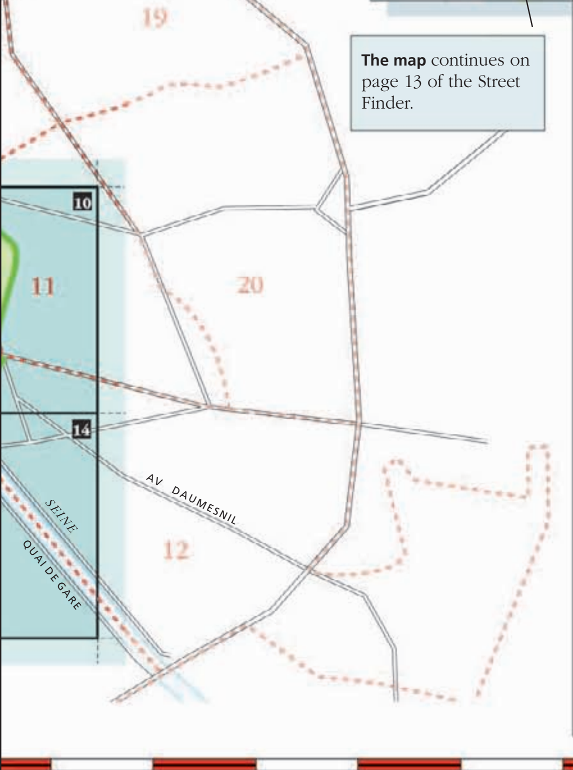
Hôtel de Ville ⑩

Pl de l'Hôtel-de-Ville 75004.
Map 9 B3. ***Tel*** *01 42 76 40 40.*
M *Hôtel-de-Ville.* ○ *to groups: phone to arrange (01 42 76 54 04).*
● *public hols and for official functions (phone to check).* ♿

The letter and number give the grid reference. Letters go across the map's top and bottom; figures on its sides.


9
A
B
C
1
2
3
4
5
13
RUE REAUMUR
RUE RAMBUTEAU
BOULEVARD DE SEBASTOPOL
RUE BEAUBOURG
RUE DE RIVOLI
RUE DU RENARD
QUAI DE GESVRES
QUAI DE L'HOTEL DE VILLE
QUAI DE LA TOURNELLE
QUAI DES CELESTINS
QUAI SAINT BERNARD
BOULEVARD SAINT GERMAIN
RUE SAINT JACQUES
QUARTIER LATIN
Les Halles
Centre Georges Pompidou
Hôtel de Ville
ILE DE LA CITE
ILE ST LOUIS
Notre-Dame
Conciergerie
Ste-Chapelle
Musée de Cluny
La Sorbonne
Archives Nationales

The map continues on page 13 of the Street Finder.

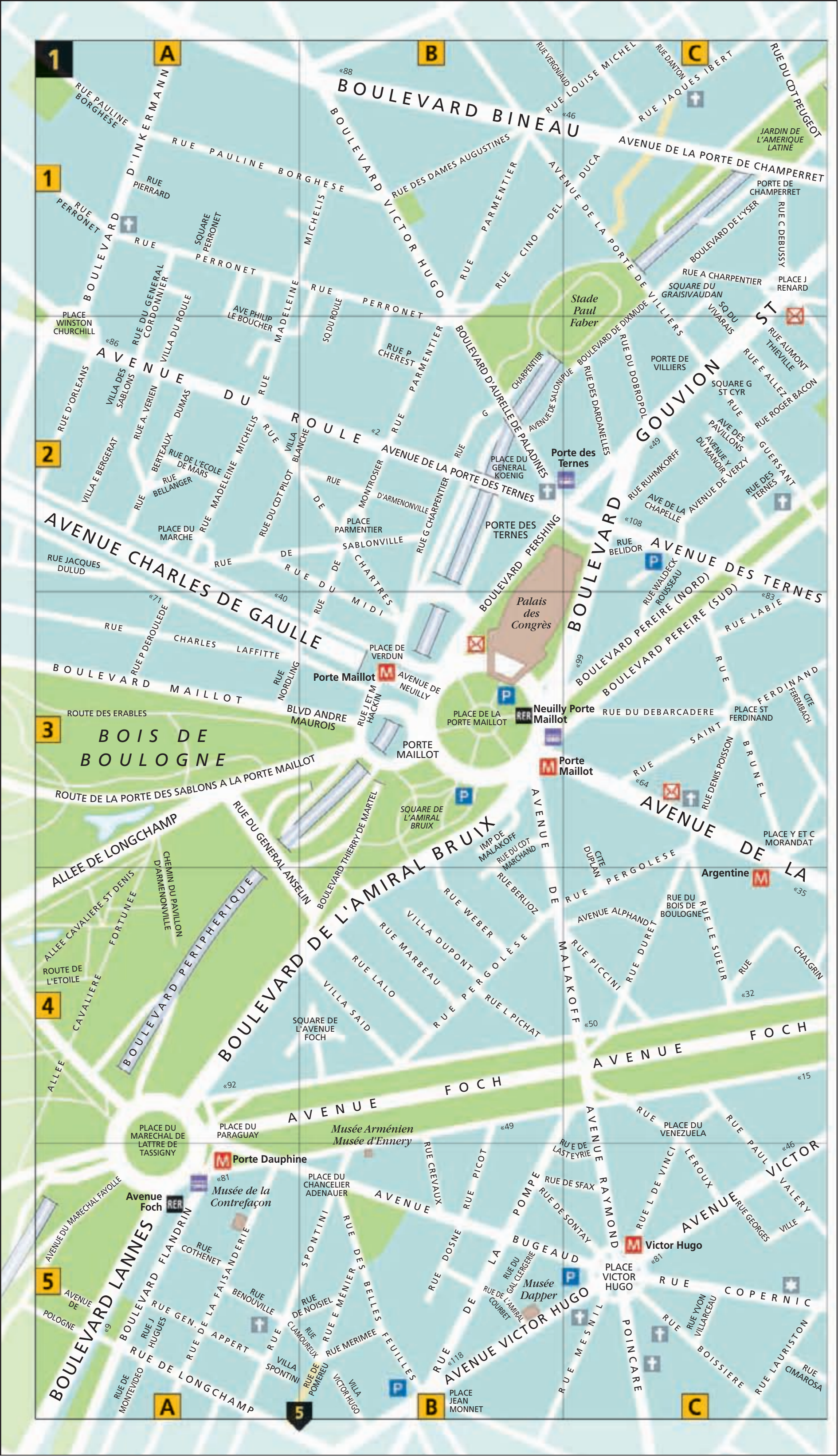

RUE DE FLANDES
19
20
10
11
14
12
AV DAUMESNIL
SEINE
QUAI DE GARE

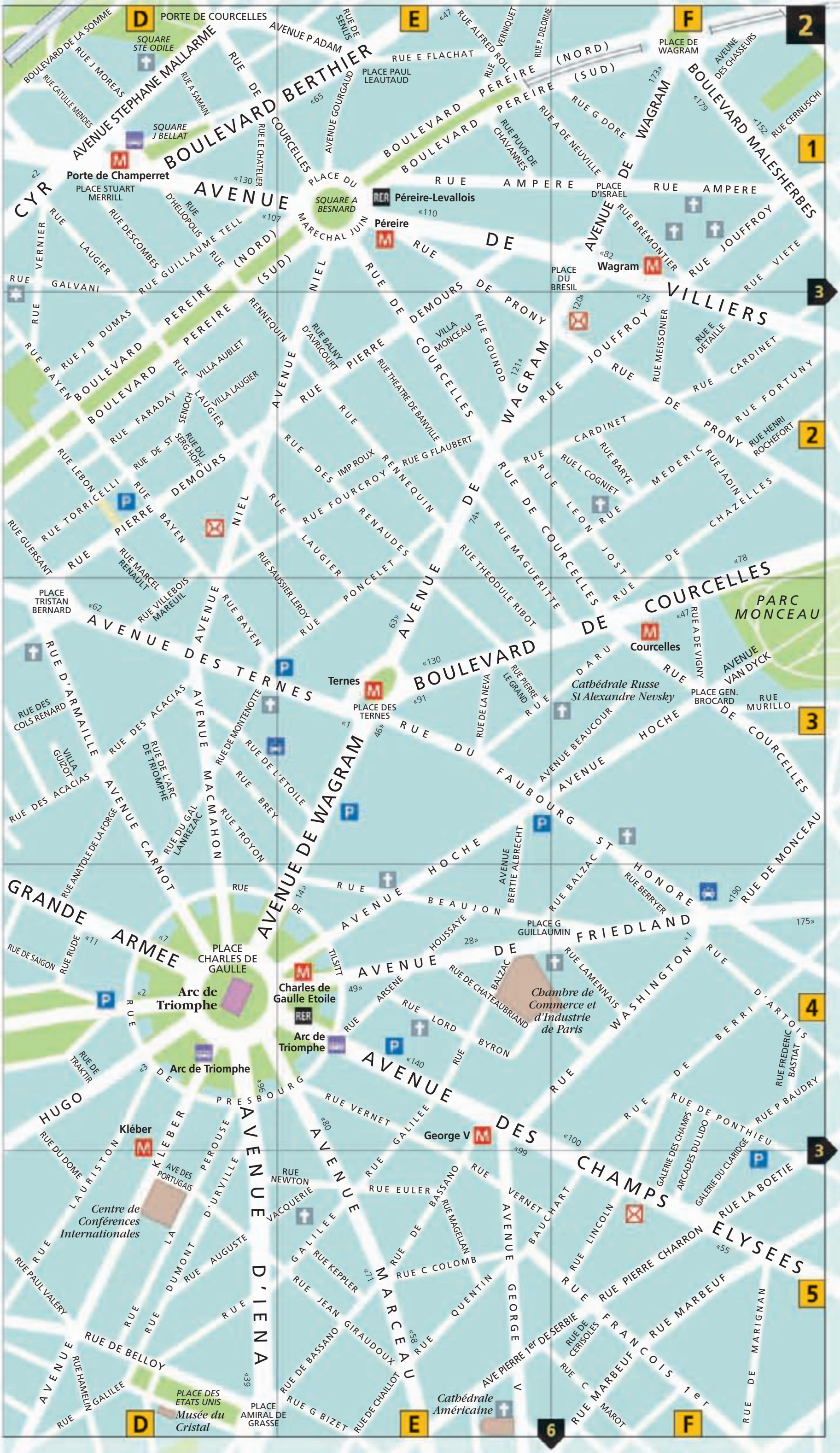
KEY TO STREET FINDER

- ▨ Major sight
- ▨ Other sight
- ▨ Other building
- Ⓜ Metro station
- RER RER station
- ▬ Main bus stop
- ▬ River boat boarding point
- P Main car park
- i Tourist information
- ✚ Hospital with emergency room
- ▨ Police station
- ✝ Church
- ✡ Synagogue
- ✉ Post office
- ═ Railroad line
- ═ Autoroute
- ▬ Pedestrian street
- ⁴¹³² House number (main street)

SCALE OF MAP PAGES

0 meters 200
0 yards 200
1:12,000


1
A
B
C
1
2
3
4
5
5
«88
BOULEVARD BINEAU
RUE VERGNIAUD
RUE LOUISE MICHEL
RUE DANTON
RUE JACQUES IBERT
RUE DU CDT PEUGEOT
«46
JARDIN DE L'AMERIQUE LATINE
AVENUE DE LA PORTE DE CHAMPERRET
PORTE DE CHAMPERRET
RUE PAULINE BORGHESE
BOULEVARD D'INKERMANN
RUE PAULINE BORGHESE
RUE PIERRARD
RUE PERRONET
SQUARE PERRONET
RUE PERRONET
BOULEVARD VICTOR HUGO
RUE DES DAMES AUGUSTINES
RUE MICHELIS
RUE PARMENTIER
RUE CINO DEL DUCA
AVENUE DE LA PORTE DE VILLIERS
BOULEVARD DE L'LYSER
RUE C DEBUSSY
RUE A CHARPENTIER
SQUARE DU GRAISIVAUDAN
SQ DU VIVARAIS
PLACE J RENARD
Stade Paul Faber
BOULEVARD
RUE DU GENERAL CORDONNIER
VILLA DU ROULE
AVE PHILIP LE BOUCHER
RUE MADELEINE
SQ DU ROULE
RUE PERRONET
PLACE WINSTON CHURCHILL
«86
AVENUE DU ROULE
RUE P CHEREST
RUE PARMENTIER
BOULEVARD D'AURELLE DE PALADINES
CHARPENTIER
BOULEVARD DE DIXMUDE
RUE DU DOBROPOL
PORTE DE VILLIERS
BOULEVARD GOUVION ST
SQUARE G ST CYR
RUE AUMONT THIEVILLE
RUE E ALLEZ
RUE ROGER BACON
RUE D'ORLEANS
VILLA DES SABLONS
RUE A. VERIEN
DUMAS
RUE DE L'ECOLE DE MARS
BERTEAUX
RUE BELLANGER
RUE MADELEINE MICHELIS
RUE VILLA BLANCHE
«2
RUE
AVENUE DE LA PORTE DES TERNES
AVENUE DE SALONIQUE
RUE DES DARDANELLES
PLACE DU GENERAL KOENIG
Porte des Ternes
«49
RUE RUHMKORFF
AVE DES PAVILLONS
AVENUE DU MANOIR
AVENUE DE VERZY
AVE DE LA CHAPELLE
RUE GUERSANT
RUE DES TERNES
VILLA E BERGERAT
RUE
PLACE DU MARCHE
RUE DU CDT PILOT
RUE MONTROSIER
D'ARMENONVILLE
RUE G CHARPENTIER
PLACE PARMENTIER
RUE DE SABLONVILLE
PORTE DES TERNES
BOULEVARD PERSHING
«108
RUE BELIDOR
AVENUE DES TERNES
AVENUE CHARLES DE GAULLE
RUE JACQUES DULUD
RUE
RUE DU MIDI
RUE DE CHARTRES
RUE WALDECK ROUSSEAU
BOULEVARD PEREIRE (NORD)
BOULEVARD PEREIRE (SUD)
«83
RUE LABIE
«71
«40
RUE CHARLES LAFFITTE
RUE P DEROULEDE
PLACE DE VERDUN
Palais des Congrès
BOULEVARD
«99
RUE
BOULEVARD MAILLOT
RUE NORDLING
Porte Maillot
AVENUE DE NEUILLY
RUE J ET M HACKIN
BLVD ANDRE MAUROIS
PLACE DE LA PORTE MAILLOT
Neuilly Porte Maillot
RUE DU DEBARCADERE
PLACE ST FERDINAND
RUE FERDINAND
CITE FERDINAND FEREMBACH
ROUTE DES ERABLES
BOIS DE BOULOGNE
PORTE MAILLOT
Porte Maillot
RUE SAINT
RUE DENIS POISSON
RUE BRUNEL
«64
ROUTE DE LA PORTE DES SABLONS A LA PORTE MAILLOT
AVENUE DE LA
SQUARE DE L'AMIRAL BRUIX
PLACE Y ET C MORANDAT
ALLEE DE LONGCHAMP
RUE DU GENERAL ANSELIN
BOULEVARD THIERRY DE MARTEL
IMP DE MALAKOFF
RUE DU CDT MARCHAND
AVENUE DE MALAKOFF
CITE DUPLAN
RUE PERGOLESE
Argentine
«35
CHEMIN DU PAVILLON D'ARMENONVILLE
ALLEE CAVALIERE ST DENIS
FORTUNEE
BOULEVARD PERIPHERIQUE
BOULEVARD DE L'AMIRAL BRUIX
RUE BERLIOZ
RUE WEBER
VILLA DUPONT
RUE MARBEAU
RUE LALO
VILLA SAID
RUE PERGOLESE
RUE L PICHAT
AVENUE ALPHAND
RUE DURET
RUE PICCINI
RUE DU BOIS DE BOULOGNE
RUE LE SUEUR
RUE
RUE CHALGRIN
«32
ROUTE DE L'ETOILE
CAVALIERE
ALLEE
SQUARE DE L'AVENUE FOCH
«50
AVENUE FOCH
«15
«92
AVENUE FOCH
PLACE DU MARECHAL DE LATTRE DE TASSIGNY
PLACE DU PARAGUAY
Musée Arménien
Musée d'Ennery
«49
RUE CREVAUX
RUE PICOT
RUE DE LASTEYRIE
AVENUE RAYMOND
RUE PLACE DU VENEZUELA
RUE L DE VINCI
RUE LEROUX
RUE PAUL VALERY
«46
VICTOR
Porte Dauphine
«81
Musée de la Contrefaçon
PLACE DU CHANCELIER ADENAUER
AVENUE
RUE DE LA POMPE
RUE DE SFAX
RUE DE SONTAY
AVENUE
RUE GEORGES VILLE
AVENUE DU MARECHAL FAYOLLE
Avenue Foch
BOULEVARD LANNES
BOULEVARD FLANDRIN
RUE COTHENET
RUE DE LA FAISANDERIE
RUE SPONTINI
RUE DES BELLES FEUILLES
RUE DOSNE
RUE BUGEAUD
Victor Hugo
«81
PLACE VICTOR HUGO
RUE COPERNIC
AVENUE DE POLOGNE
RUE BENOUVILLE
RUE DE NOISIEL
RUE E MENIER
RUE DU GAL CLERGERIE
RUE DE L'AMIRAL COURBET
Musée Dapper
RUE MESNIL
RUE POINCARE
RUE YVON VILLARCEAU
RUE BOISSIERE
RUE LAURISTON
RUE CIMAROSA
«9
RUE J HUGUES
RUE GEN. APPERT
RUE
CLAMOUREUX
RUE MERIMEE
RUE
«118
AVENUE VICTOR HUGO
VILLA SPONTINI
RUE DE POMEREU
VILLA VICTOR HUGO
RUE DE MONTEVIDEO
RUE DE LONGCHAMP
PLACE JEAN MONNET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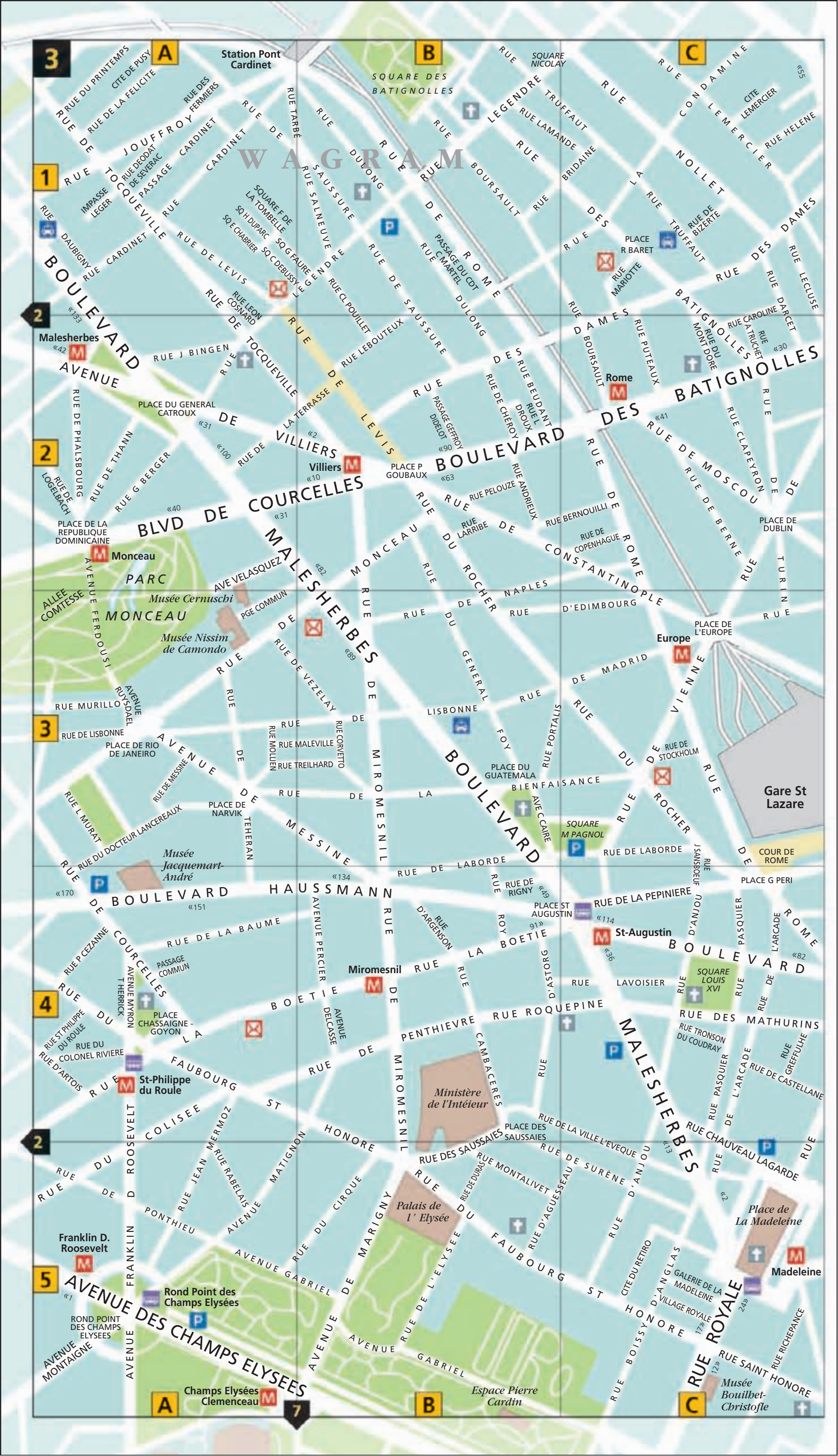
6
PORTE DE COURCELLES
SQUARE STE ODILE
BOULEVARD DE LA SOMME
RUE J MOREAS
RUE CATULLE MENDES
AVENUE STEPHANE MALLARME
SQUARE J BELLAT
RUE A SAMAIN
RUE DE COURCELLES
RUE LE CHATELIER
AVENUE P ADAM
BOULEVARD BERTHIER
RUE DE SENLIS
AVENUE GOURGAUD
RUE E FLACHAT
PLACE PAUL LEAUTAUD
RUE ALFRED ROLL
RUE VERNIQUET
RUE P. DELORME
BOULEVARD PEREIRE (NORD)
BOULEVARD PEREIRE (SUD)
RUE PUVIS DE CHAVANNES
RUE G DORE
RUE A DE NEUVILLE
PLACE DE WAGRAM
AVENUE DES CHASSEURS
BOULEVARD MALESHERBES
RUE CERNUSCHI
AVENUE DE WAGRAM
Porte de Champerret
PLACE STUART MERRILL
CYR
RUE VERNIER
RUE LAUGIER
RUE DESCOMBES
RUE D'HELIOPOLIS
AVENUE
PLACE DU MARECHAL JUIN
SQUARE A BESNARD
Péreire-Levallois
Péreire
RUE AMPERE
PLACE D'ISRAEL
RUE BREMONTIER
RUE JOUFFROY
Wagram
RUE VIETE
RUE DE VILLIERS
PLACE DU BRESIL
RUE GALVANI
RUE GUILLAUME TELL
BOULEVARD PEREIRE (NORD)
BOULEVARD PEREIRE (SUD)
RUE NIEL
RUE DE COURCELLES
RUE DEMOURS
RUE DE PRONY
RUE J B DUMAS
RUE BAYEN
RUE RENNEQUIN
RUE BALNY D'AVRICOURT
RUE PIERRE DEMOURS
VILLA MONCEAU
RUE GOUNOD
RUE E DETAILLE
RUE MEISSONIER
RUE CARDINET
RUE FORTUNY
VILLA AUBLET
VILLA LAUGIER
RUE LAUGIER
RUE FARADAY
RUE THEATRE DE BANVILLE
AVENUE NIEL
RUE DE PRONY
RUE HENRI ROCHEFORT
RUE DE ST SENOCH
RUE DU SERGENT HOFF
RUE LEBON
RUE TORRICELLI
RUE BAYEN
RUE DES RENAUDES
IMP ROUX
RUE G FLAUBERT
RUE RENNEQUIN
RUE FOURCROY
RUE DE COURCELLES
RUE L COGNIET
RUE BARYE
RUE JADIN
RUE MEDERIC
RUE DE CHAZELLES
RUE LEON JOST
RUE GUERSANT
RUE MARCEL RENAULT
RUE LAUGIER
RUE PONCELET
RUE THEODULE RIBOT
RUE MAGUERITTE
BOULEVARD DE COURCELLES
PARC MONCEAU
PLACE TRISTAN BERNARD
RUE VILLEBOIS MAREUIL
RUE BAYEN
RUE SAUSSIER LEROY
AVENUE DES TERNES
Courcelles
RUE DARU
RUE A DE VIGNY
AVENUE VAN DYCK
Ternes
PLACE DES TERNES
BOULEVARD
RUE PIERRE LE GRAND
RUE DE LA NEVA
Cathédrale Russe St Alexandre Nevsky
PLACE GEN. BROCARD
RUE MURILLO
RUE DE COURCELLES
RUE D'ARMAILLE
RUE DES COLS RENARD
RUE DES ACACIAS
VILLA GUIZOT
RUE DE L'ARC DE TRIOMPHE
RUE DE MONTENOTTE
RUE DE L'ETOILE
RUE DU FAUBOURG ST HONORE
AVENUE BEAUCOUR
AVENUE HOCHE
AVENUE MACMAHON
RUE BREY
RUE TROYON
AVENUE DE WAGRAM
RUE DU GAL LANREZAC
AVENUE CARNOT
RUE ANATOLE DE LA FORGE
AVENUE BERTIE ALBRECHT
RUE BALZAC
RUE BERRYER
RUE DE MONCEAU
AVENUE HOCHE
RUE BEAUJON
GRANDE ARMEE
RUE DE SAIGON
RUE RUDE
PLACE CHARLES DE GAULLE
RUE DE TILSITT
AVENUE DE FRIEDLAND
PLACE G GUILLAUMIN
HOUSSAYE
Arc de Triomphe
Charles de Gaulle Etoile
RUE ARSENE HOUSSAYE
RUE DE CHATEAUBRIAND
RUE BALZAC
RUE LAMENNAIS
RUE WASHINGTON
RUE D'ARTOIS
Chambre de Commerce et d'Industrie de Paris
RUE LORD BYRON
RUE DE BERRI
RUE FREDERIC BASTIAT
Arc de Triomphe
RUE DE TRAKTIR
AVENUE DES CHAMPS ELYSEES
RUE DE PRESBOURG
RUE VERNET
RUE GALILEE
George V
RUE DE PONTHIEU
RUE P BAUDRY
HUGO
Kléber
AVENUE KLEBER
RUE LAURISTON
RUE DU DOME
AVE DES PORTUGAIS
Centre de Conférences Internationales
RUE LA PEROUSE
RUE D'URVILLE
RUE DUMONT
RUE AUGUSTE VACQUERIE
RUE NEWTON
RUE EULER
AVENUE D'IENA
AVENUE MARCEAU
RUE DE BASSANO
RUE MAGELLAN
RUE C COLOMB
RUE QUENTIN BAUCHART
AVENUE GEORGE V
RUE LINCOLN
GALERIE DES CHAMPS
ARCADES DU LIDO
GALERIE DU CLARIDGE
RUE LA BOETIE
RUE PIERRE CHARRON
RUE MARBEUF
RUE FRANCOIS 1er
RUE DE MARIGNAN
RUE PAUL VALÉRY
RUE DE BELLOY
RUE HAMELIN
AVENUE
RUE GALILEE
RUE KEPPLER
RUE JEAN GIRAUDOUX
RUE DE BASSANO
RUE G BIZET
RUE DE CHAILLOT
AVE PIERRE 1er DE SERBIE
RUE DE CERISOLES
RUE MARBEUF
RUE C MAROT
PLACE DES ETATS UNIS
Musée du Cristal
PLACE AMIRAL DE GRASSE
Cathédrale Américaine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Station Pont Cardinet
SQUARE DES BATIGNOLLES
SQUARE NICOLAY
WAGRAM
RUE DU PRINTEMPS
CITE DE PUSY
RUE DE LA FELICITE
RUE DES FERMIERS
RUE JOUFFROY
RUE DEODAT DE SEVERAC
PASSAGE CARDINET
RUE CARDINET
IMPASSE LEGER
RUE DE TOCQUEVILLE
RUE DAUBIGNY
RUE TARBE
RUE DE SAUSSURE
RUE SALNEUVE
RUE DULONG
SQUARE F DE LA TOMBELLE
SQ H DUPARC
SQ E CHABRIER
SQ G FAURE
SQ C DEBUSSY
RUE LEGENDRE
RUE DE LEVIS
RUE LEON COSNARD
RUE CL POUILLET
RUE DE ROME
PASSAGE DU CDT C MARTEL
RUE BOURSAULT
RUE TRUFFAUT
RUE LAMANDE
RUE BRIDAINE
RUE DES DAMES
RUE DE LA CONDAMINE
CITE LEMERCIER
RUE LEMERCIER
RUE HELENE
RUE NOLLET
RUE DE BIZERTE
PLACE R BARET
RUE MARIOTTE
RUE LECLUSE
RUE DARCET
RUE CAROLINE
RUE A TRUCHET
RUE DU MONT DORE
RUE PUTEAUX
BOULEVARD DES BATIGNOLLES
Rome
Malesherbes
BOULEVARD
AVENUE DE VILLIERS
RUE J BINGEN
RUE LEBOUTEUX
LA TERRASSE
PLACE DU GENERAL CATROUX
RUE DE PHALSBOURG
RUE DE LOGELBACH
RUE DE THANN
RUE G BERGER
Villiers
PLACE P GOUBAUX
PASSAGE GEFFROY DIDELOT
RUE DE CHEROY
RUE BEAUDANT
RUE L DROUX
RUE ANDRIEUX
RUE PELOUZE
RUE LARRIBE
RUE BERNOUILLI
RUE DE COPENHAGUE
RUE DE CONSTANTINOPLE
RUE DE MOSCOU
RUE DE BERNE
RUE CLAPEYRON
RUE DE TURIN
PLACE DE DUBLIN
BLVD DE COURCELLES
PLACE DE LA REPUBLIQUE DOMINICAINE
Monceau
PARC MONCEAU
ALLEE COMTESSE
AVENUE FERDOUSI
AVE VELASQUEZ
Musée Cernuschi
PGE COMMUN
Musée Nissim de Camondo
BOULEVARD MALESHERBES
RUE DE MONCEAU
RUE DU ROCHER
RUE DE NAPLES
RUE D'EDIMBOURG
PLACE DE L'EUROPE
Europe
RUE DE MADRID
RUE DE VIENNE
RUE DE VEZELAY
RUE DU GENERAL FOY
RUE DE LISBONNE
RUE MURILLO
AVENUE RUYSDAEL
RUE DE LISBONNE
PLACE DE RIO DE JANEIRO
AVENUE DE MESSINE
RUE DE MESSINE
RUE MOLLIEN
RUE MALEVILLE
RUE TREILHARD
RUE CORVETTO
RUE DE MIROMESNIL
RUE DE LA BIENFAISANCE
PLACE DU GUATEMALA
AVE CESAR CAIRE
RUE PORTALIS
SQUARE M PAGNOL
RUE DE STOCKHOLM
RUE DU ROCHER
Gare St Lazare
RUE DE TEHERAN
PLACE DE NARVIK
RUE L MURAT
RUE DU DOCTEUR LANCEREAUX
Musée Jacquemart-André
RUE DE LABORDE
COUR DE ROME
RUE J SANSBOEUF
PLACE G PERI
BOULEVARD HAUSSMANN
RUE DE COURCELLES
RUE DE LA BAUME
RUE DE RIGNY
PLACE ST AUGUSTIN
RUE DE LA PEPINIERE
St-Augustin
RUE D'ANJOU
RUE PASQUIER
RUE DE L'ARCADE
RUE DE ROME
BOULEVARD
RUE D'ARGENSON
RUE ROY
RUE LA BOETIE
AVENUE PERCIER
Miromesnil
RUE P CEZANNE
PASSAGE COMMUN
AVENUE MYRON T HERRICK
PLACE CHASSAIGNE - GOYON
AVENUE DELCASSE
RUE D'ASTORG
RUE LAVOISIER
SQUARE LOUIS XVI
RUE DES MATHURINS
RUE TRONSON DU COUDRAY
RUE GREFFULHE
RUE DE CASTELLANE
RUE ST PHILIPPE DU ROULE
RUE DU COLONEL RIVIERE
RUE D'ARTOIS
St-Philippe du Roule
RUE DU FAUBOURG ST HONORE
RUE DE PENTHIEVRE
RUE ROQUEPINE
RUE CAMBACERES
Ministère de l'Intérieur
RUE DE LA VILLE L'EVEQUE
RUE CHAUVEAU LAGARDE
RUE DU COLISEE
RUE JEAN MERMOZ
RUE RABELAIS
AVENUE MATIGNON
RUE DU CIRQUE
RUE DES SAUSSAIES
PLACE DES SAUSSAIES
RUE DE SURENE
RUE DE DURAS
RUE MONTALIVET
RUE D'AGUESSEAU
Palais de l' Elysée
AVENUE DE MARIGNY
RUE DE L'ELYSEE
RUE DE PONTHIEU
Franklin D. Roosevelt
AVENUE FRANKLIN D ROOSEVELT
Rond Point des Champs Elysées
ROND POINT DES CHAMPS ELYSEES
AVENUE MONTAIGNE
AVENUE DES CHAMPS ELYSEES
AVENUE GABRIEL
Champs Elysées Clemenceau
Espace Pierre Cardin
CITE DU RETIRO
RUE BOISSY D'ANGLAS
GALERIE DE LA MADELEINE
VILLAGE ROYALE
RUE ROYALE
Place de La Madeleine
Madeleine
RUE SAINT HONORE
RUE RICHEPANCE
Musée Bouilhet-Christofle
«55
«133
«42
«31
«100
«2
«10
«90
«63
«41
«30
«40
«31
«82
«89
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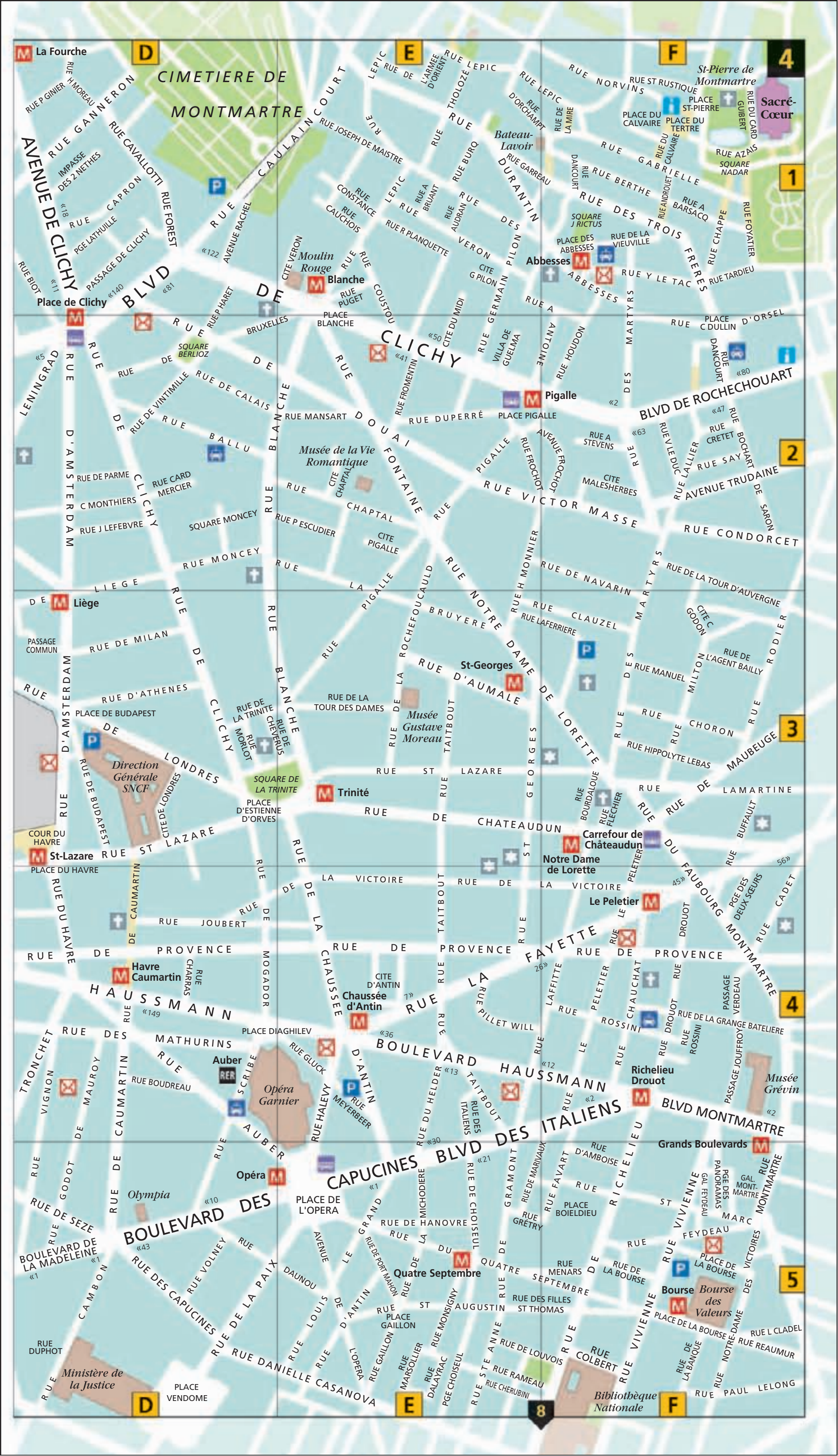
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La Fourche
CIMETIERE DE MONTMARTRE
Sacré-Cœur
St-Pierre de Montmartre
PLACE ST-PIERRE
PLACE DU CALVAIRE
PLACE DU TERTRE
SQUARE NADAR
RUE NORVINS
RUE ST RUSTIQUE
RUE DU CARD GUIBERT
RUE AZAIS
RUE GABRIELLE
RUE DU CALVAIRE
RUE ANDROUET
RUE A BARSACQ
RUE CHAPPE
RUE FOYATIER
RUE TARDIEU
RUE BERTHE
RUE DES TROIS FRERES
RUE Y LE TAC
RUE DE LA VIEUVILLE
PLACE DES ABBESSES
SQUARE J RICTUS
Abbesses
RUE DANCOURT
RUE LEPIC
RUE DE L'ARMEE D'ORIENT
RUE D'ORCHAMPT
RUE DE LA MIRE
Bateau-Lavoir
RUE GARREAU
RUE DURANTIN
RUE THOLOZÉ
RUE BURQ
RUE AUDRAN
RUE A BRUANT
RUE VERON
RUE JOSEPH DE MAISTRE
RUE CAULAINCOURT
RUE CONSTANCE
RUE CAUCHOIS
RUE R PLANQUETTE
CITE G PILON
RUE GERMAIN PILON
RUE DES ABBESSES
RUE ANTOINE
RUE HOUDON
RUE DES MARTYRS
PLACE C DULLIN
RUE D'ORSEL
RUE DANCOURT
Moulin Rouge
CITE VERON
Blanche
RUE PUGET
RUE COUSTOU
PLACE BLANCHE
RUE BRUXELLES
BLVD DE CLICHY
«122
«140
«81
«50
«41
CITE DU MIDI
VILLA DE GUELMA
Pigalle
PLACE PIGALLE
«2
«80
BLVD DE ROCHECHOUART
RUE GANNERON
RUE P GINIER
RUE H MOREAU
IMPASSE DES 2 NETHES
RUE CAVALLOTTI
RUE FOREST
RUE CAPRON
PGE LATHUILLE
PASSAGE DE CLICHY
AVENUE RACHEL
AVENUE DE CLICHY
RUE BIOT
«18
«11
Place de Clichy
RUE P HARET
SQUARE BERLIOZ
RUE DE VINTIMILLE
RUE DE CALAIS
RUE DE DOUAI
RUE FONTAINE
RUE FROMENTIN
RUE DUPERRÉ
RUE MANSART
RUE BLANCHE
RUE BALLU
RUE LENINGRAD
RUE D'AMSTERDAM
RUE DE PARME
RUE CARD MERCIER
C MONTHIERS
RUE J LEFEBVRE
SQUARE MONCEY
RUE MONCEY
RUE DE LIEGE
RUE DE CLICHY
«5
Musée de la Vie Romantique
CITE CHAPTAL
RUE CHAPTAL
RUE P ESCUDIER
CITE PIGALLE
RUE PIGALLE
RUE FROCHOT
AVENUE FROCHOT
RUE VICTOR MASSE
RUE A STEVENS
CITE MALESHERBES
«63
«47
RUE LALLIER
RUE CRETET
RUE BOCHART DE SARON
RUE SAY
RUE LE DUC
AVENUE TRUDAINE
RUE CONDORCET
RUE DE NAVARIN
RUE DE LA TOUR D'AUVERGNE
RUE H MONNIER
RUE CLAUZEL
RUE LAFERRIERE
CITE C GODON
RUE RODIER
RUE DE L'AGENT BAILLY
RUE MANUEL
RUE MILTON
RUE CHORON
RUE HIPPOLYTE LEBAS
RUE DE MAUBEUGE
RUE LAMARTINE
Liège
PASSAGE COMMUN
RUE DE MILAN
RUE D'ATHENES
PLACE DE BUDAPEST
RUE DE LONDRES
Direction Générale SNCF
RUE DE BUDAPEST
CITE DE LONDRES
RUE DE LA TRINITE
RUE MORLOT
RUE DE CHEVERUS
SQUARE DE LA TRINITE
PLACE D'ESTIENNE D'ORVES
Trinité
RUE DE LA TOUR DES DAMES
Musée Gustave Moreau
RUE DE LA ROCHEFOUCAULD
RUE LA BRUYERE
RUE NOTRE DAME DE LORETTE
St-Georges
RUE D'AUMALE
RUE TAITBOUT
RUE ST GEORGES
RUE ST LAZARE
RUE DE CHATEAUDUN
RUE BOURDALOUE
RUE FLECHIER
Carrefour de Châteaudun
Notre Dame de Lorette
RUE DU FAUBOURG MONTMARTRE
RUE BUFFAULT
COUR DU HAVRE
St-Lazare
PLACE DU HAVRE
RUE DU HAVRE
RUE CAUMARTIN
RUE DE LA VICTOIRE
RUE JOUBERT
RUE DE LA CHAUSSEE D'ANTIN
RUE DE MOGADOR
RUE DE PROVENCE
RUE LA FAYETTE
Le Peletier
RUE LE PELETIER
RUE CADET
PGE DES DEUX SŒURS
RUE DROUOT
RUE CHAUCHAT
56»
45»
26»
7»
Havre Caumartin
RUE CHARRAS
BOULEVARD HAUSSMANN
«149
«36
«12
CITE D'ANTIN
Chaussée d'Antin
RUE PILLET WILL
RUE LAFFITTE
RUE ROSSINI
RUE DE LA GRANGE BATELIERE
PASSAGE VERDEAU
PASSAGE JOUFFROY
Musée Grévin
Richelieu Drouot
BLVD MONTMARTRE
«2
RUE TRONCHET
RUE VIGNON
RUE DES MATHURINS
RUE DE MAUROY
RUE BOUDREAU
Auber
RER
RUE SCRIBE
PLACE DIAGHILEV
RUE GLUCK
Opéra Garnier
RUE HALEVY
RUE MEYERBEER
RUE DU HELDER
«13
RUE DES ITALIENS
BLVD DES ITALIENS
Grands Boulevards
RUE AUBER
Opéra
PLACE DE L'OPERA
BOULEVARD DES CAPUCINES
«30
«21
«1
«10
«43
Olympia
RUE GODOT DE MAUROY
RUE DE SEZE
BOULEVARD DE LA MADELEINE
«1
RUE CAMBON
RUE DUPHOT
Ministère de la Justice
PLACE VENDOME
RUE DES CAPUCINES
RUE VOLNEY
RUE DE LA PAIX
RUE DAUNOU
RUE LOUIS LE GRAND
AVENUE DE L'OPERA
RUE DANIELLE CASANOVA
RUE DE LA MICHODIERE
RUE DE CHOISEUL
RUE DE HANOVRE
RUE DE PORT MAHON
RUE DU QUATRE SEPTEMBRE
Quatre Septembre
RUE D'ANTIN
RUE ST AUGUSTIN
PLACE GAILLON
RUE GAILLON
RUE MARSOLLIER
RUE DALAYRAC
PGE CHOISEUL
RUE MONSIGNY
RUE DE GRAMONT
RUE DE MARIVAUX
RUE FAVART
RUE D'AMBOISE
PLACE BOIELDIEU
RUE GRÉTRY
RUE MENARS
RUE DES FILLES ST THOMAS
RUE STE ANNE
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RUE RAMEAU
RUE CHERUBINI
RUE COLBERT
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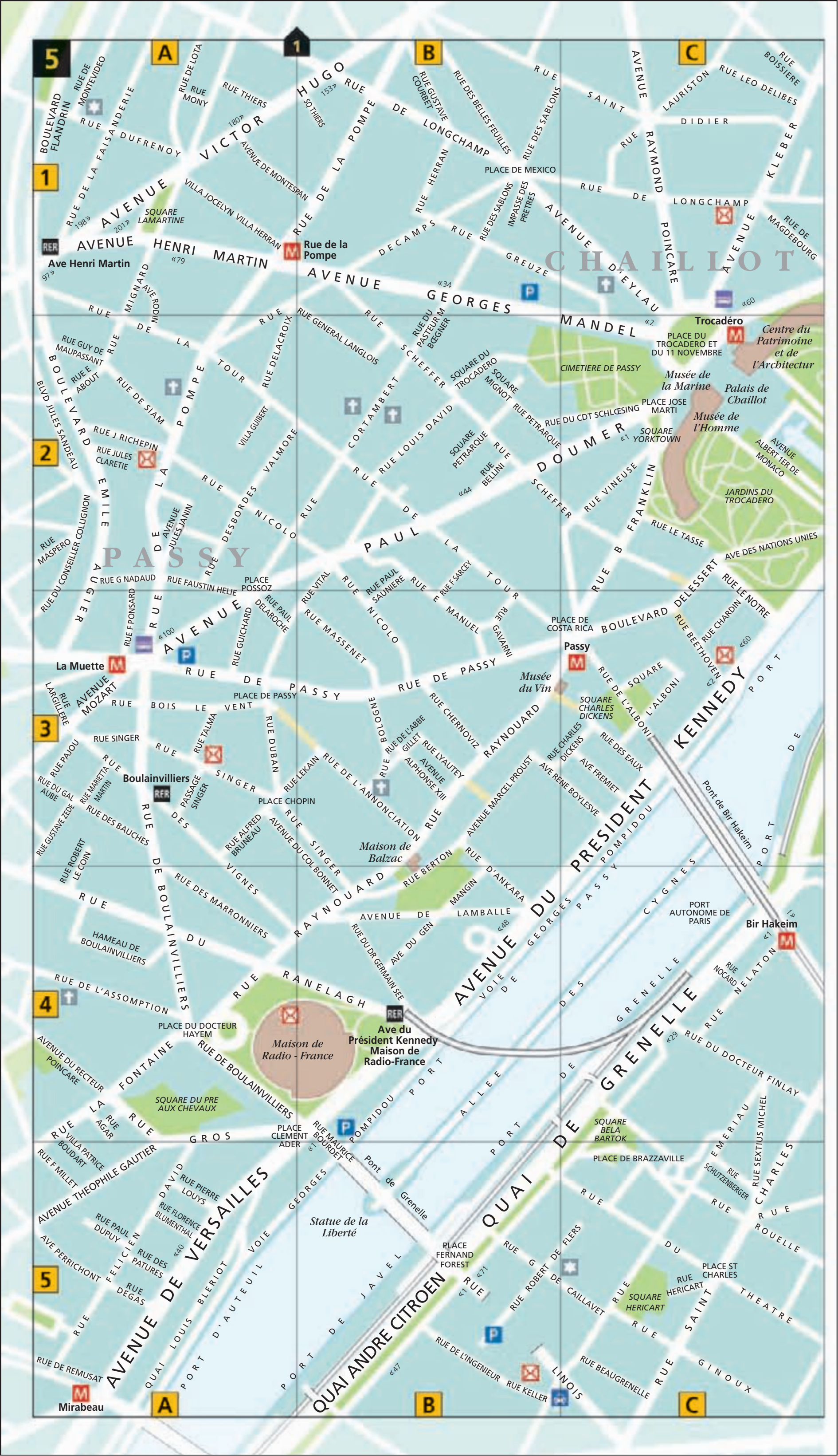
RUE VIVIENNE
RUE ST MARC
RUE FEYDEAU
GAL FEYDEAU
PGE DES PANORAMAS
GAL MONTMARTRE
RUE MONTMARTRE
RUE DE LA BOURSE
PLACE DE LA BOURSE
Bourse
Bourse des Valeurs
RUE DES VICTOIRES
RUE NOTRE DAME DES VICTOIRES
RUE DE LA BANQUE
RUE L CLADEL
RUE REAUMUR
RUE PAUL LELONG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RUE THIERS
RUE DUFRENOY
RUE DE LA FAISANDERIE
AVENUE VICTOR HUGO
153»
SQ THIERS
180»
198»
201»
AVENUE DE MONTESPAN
VILLA JOCELYN
VILLA HERRAN
SQUARE LAMARTINE
RUE DE LA POMPE
Rue de la Pompe
RER
Ave Henri Martin
97»
AVENUE HENRI MARTIN
«79
AVENUE GEORGES MANDEL
«34
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RUE DE LONGCHAMP
RUE GUSTAVE COURBET
RUE DES BELLES FEUILLES
RUE DES SABLONS
PLACE DE MEXICO
RUE HERRAN
RUE DECAMPS
RUE GREUZE
IMPASSE DES PRETRES
RUE SAINT DIDIER
AVENUE RAYMOND POINCARE
RUE LAURISTON
RUE LEO DELIBES
RUE BOISSIERE
AVENUE KLEBER
RUE DE MAGDEBOURG
AVENUE D'EYLAU
CHAILLOT
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Trocadéro
PLACE DU TROCADERO ET DU 11 NOVEMBRE
Centre du Patrimoine et de l'Architectur
CIMETIERE DE PASSY
Musée de la Marine
Palais de Chaillot
Musée de l'Homme
PLACE JOSE MARTI
SQUARE YORKTOWN
«1
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JARDINS DU TROCADERO
RUE MIGNARD
AVE RODIN
RUE DE LA TOUR
RUE GUY DE MAUPASSANT
RUE E ABOUT
BOULEVARD EMILE AUGIER
BLVD JULES SANDEAU
RUE DE SIAM
RUE J RICHEPIN
RUE JULES CLARETIE
RUE DELACROIX
VILLA GUIBERT
RUE GENERAL LANGLOIS
RUE SCHEFFER
RUE DU PASTEUR M BOEGNER
RUE CORTAMBERT
SQUARE DU TROCADERO
SQUARE MIGNOT
RUE PETRARQUE
RUE DU CDT SCHLŒSING
RUE LOUIS DAVID
SQUARE PETRARQUE
RUE BELLINI
RUE VALMORE
RUE DESBORDES VALMORE
RUE NICOLO
AVENUE PAUL DOUMER
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RUE B FRANKLIN
RUE LE TASSE
AVE DES NATIONS UNIES
AVENUE JULES JANIN
RUE MASPERO
RUE DU CONSEILLER COLLIGNON
PASSY
RUE G NADAUD
RUE FAUSTIN HELIE
PLACE POSSOZ
RUE PAUL DELAROCHE
RUE GUICHARD
RUE F PONSARD
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RUE VITAL
RUE PAUL SAUNIERE
RUE E MANUEL
RUE F SARCEY
RUE GAVARNI
RUE MASSENET
PLACE DE COSTA RICA
BOULEVARD DELESSERT
RUE LE NOTRE
RUE CHARDIN
RUE BEETHOVEN
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La Muette
AVENUE MOZART
RUE LARGILLIERE
RUE DE PASSY
PLACE DE PASSY
RUE BOIS LE VENT
Passy
Musée du Vin
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SQUARE DE L'ALBONI
SQUARE CHARLES DICKENS
AVENUE DU PRESIDENT KENNEDY
RUE SINGER
RUE TALMA
RUE DUBAN
RUE BOLOGNE
RUE DE L'ABBE GILLET
RUE LYAUTEY
AVENUE ALPHONSE XIII
RUE CHERNOVIZ
RUE RAYNOUARD
RUE CHARLES DICKENS
RUE DES EAUX
AVE FREMIET
AVE RENE BOYLESVE
AVENUE MARCEL PROUST
Pont de Bir Hakeim
PORT DE PASSY
RUE PAJOU
RUE MARIETTA MARTIN
RUE DU GAL AUBE
Boulainvilliers
PASSAGE SINGER
RUE DES VIGNES
PLACE CHOPIN
RUE LEKAIN
RUE DE L'ANNONCIATION
RUE ALFRED BRUNEAU
AVENUE DU COL BONNET
RUE GUSTAVE ZEDE
RUE DES BAUCHES
RUE ROBERT LE COIN
RUE DU BOULAINVILLIERS
Maison de Balzac
RUE BERTON
RUE D'ANKARA
RUE MANGIN
AVENUE DE LAMBALLE
AVE DU GEN
RUE DU DR GERMAIN SEE
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VOIE GEORGES POMPIDOU
PORT AUTONOME DE PARIS
ALLEE DES CYGNES
Bir Hakeim
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RUE NOCARD
RUE NELATON
RUE DES MARRONNIERS
HAMEAU DE BOULAINVILLIERS
RUE DE L'ASSOMPTION
RUE DU RANELAGH
RER
Ave du Président Kennedy Maison de Radio-France
Maison de Radio - France
PLACE DU DOCTEUR HAYEM
RUE DE BOULAINVILLIERS
AVENUE DU RECTEUR POINCARE
RUE LA FONTAINE
SQUARE DU PRE AUX CHEVAUX
RUE AGAR
RUE GROS
PLACE CLEMENT ADER
RUE MAURICE BOURDET
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PORT DE GRENELLE
«29
RUE DU DOCTEUR FINLAY
QUAI DE GRENELLE
SQUARE BELA BARTOK
PLACE DE BRAZZAVILLE
RUE EMERIAU
RUE SCHUTZENBERGER
RUE SEXTIUS MICHEL
RUE CHARLES ROUELLE
RUE VILLA PATRICE BOUDART
RUE F MILLET
AVENUE THEOPHILE GAUTIER
RUE DAVID
RUE PIERRE LOUYS
RUE FLORENCE BLUMENTHAL
AVENUE DE VERSAILLES
Pont de Grenelle
Statue de la Liberté
PLACE FERNAND FOREST
RUE PAUL DUPUY
RUE FELICIEN
RUE DES PATURES
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RUE DEGAS
AVE PERRICHONT
RUE LOUIS BLERIOT
VOIE D'AUTEUIL
PORT DE JAVEL
RUE DE FLERS
RUE ROBERT DE CAILLAVET
RUE G
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SQUARE HERICART
RUE HERICART
PLACE ST CHARLES
RUE SAINT
RUE DE L'INGENIEUR
RUE KELLER
RUE LINOIS
RUE BEAUGRENELLE
RUE GINOUX
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Mirabeau
QUAI LOUIS BLERIOT
PORT D'AUTEUIL
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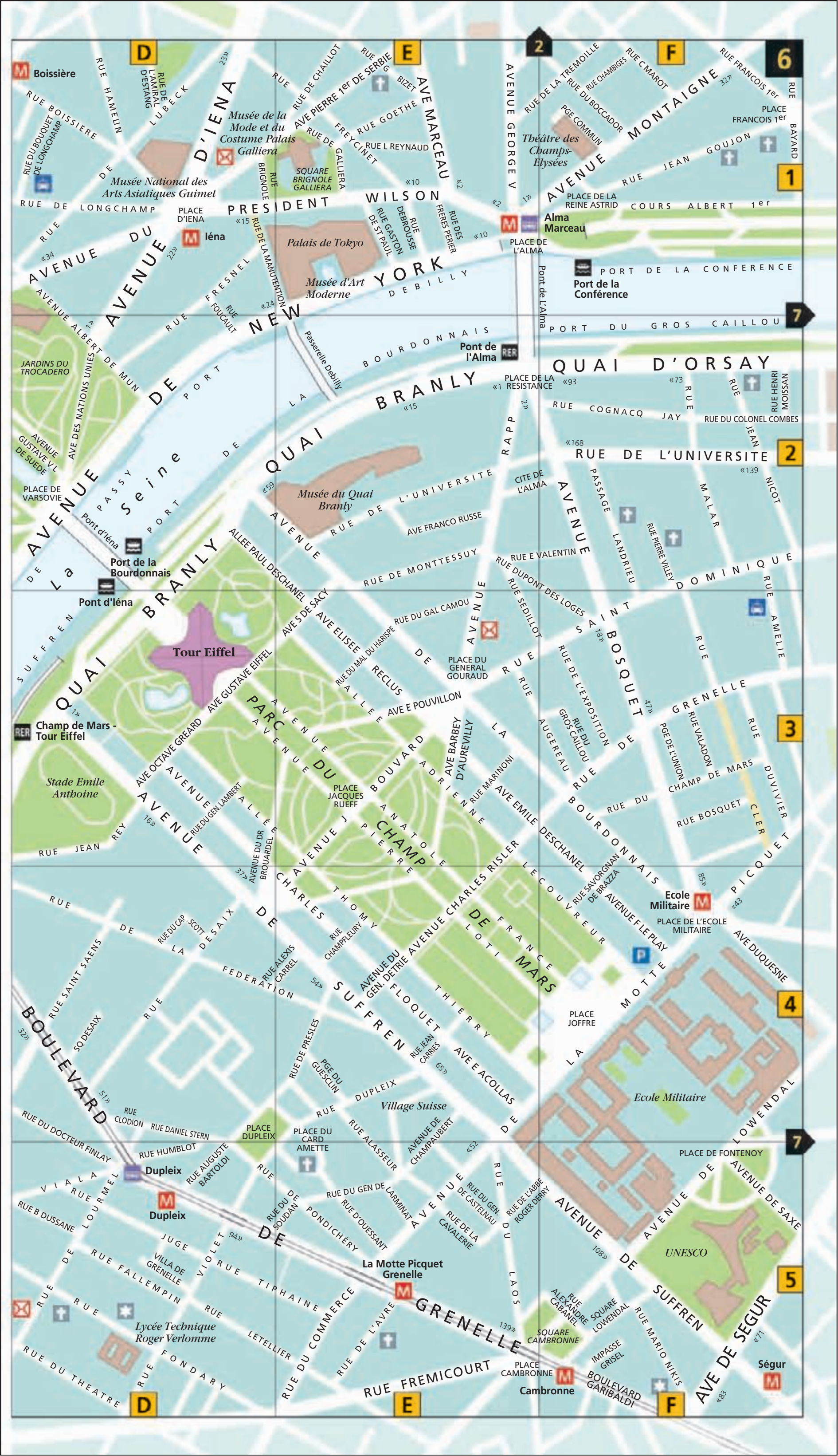
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Boissière
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RUE DE LUBECK
RUE BOISSIERE
RUE DU BOUQUET DE LONGCHAMP
AVENUE D'IENA
Musée de la Mode et du Costume Palais Galliera
Musée National des Arts Asiatiques Guimet
RUE DE LONGCHAMP
PLACE D'IENA
Iéna
RUE DE CHAILLOT
AVE PIERRE 1er DE SERBIE
RUE G BIZET
RUE GOETHE
RUE DE GALLIERA
FREYCINET
RUE L REYNAUD
AVE MARCEAU
SQUARE BRIGNOLE GALLIERA
RUE BRIGNOLE
PRESIDENT WILSON
RUE GASTON DE ST PAUL
RUE DEBROUSSE
RUE DES FRERES PERIER
RUE DE LA MANUTENTION
Palais de Tokyo
Musée d'Art Moderne
AVENUE DE NEW YORK
DEBILLY
AVENUE GEORGE V
RUE DE LA TREMOILLE
RUE DU BOCCADOR
RUE CHAMBIGES
RUE C MAROT
PGE COMMUN
Théâtre des Champs-Elysées
AVENUE MONTAIGNE
RUE FRANCOIS 1er
PLACE FRANCOIS 1er
RUE BAYARD
RUE JEAN GOUJON
PLACE DE LA REINE ASTRID
COURS ALBERT 1er
Alma Marceau
PLACE DE L'ALMA
Pont de l'Alma
PORT DE LA CONFERENCE
Port de la Conférence
PORT DU GROS CAILLOU
AVENUE DU PRESIDENT WILSON
RUE FRESNEL
RUE FOUCAULT
AVENUE ALBERT DE MUN
JARDINS DU TROCADERO
AVE DES NATIONS UNIES
AVENUE GUSTAVE V DE SUEDE
PLACE DE VARSOVIE
PORT DE PASSY
La Seine
Passerelle Debilly
PORT DE LA BOURDONNAIS
Pont de l'Alma
QUAI D'ORSAY
PLACE DE LA RESISTANCE
QUAI BRANLY
RUE COGNACQ JAY
RUE JEAN NICOT
RUE HENRI MOISSAN
RUE DU COLONEL COMBES
AVENUE RAPP
RUE DE L'UNIVERSITE
CITE DE L'ALMA
Musée du Quai Branly
AVE FRANCO RUSSE
PASSAGE LANDRIEU
RUE MALAR
RUE PIERRE VILLEY
AVENUE BOSQUET
Pont d'Iéna
Port de la Bourdonnais
Pont d'Iéna
RUE DE MONTTESSUY
RUE E VALENTIN
RUE DUPONT DES LOGES
RUE SEDILLOT
RUE SAINT DOMINIQUE
RUE AMELIE
ALLEE PAUL DESCHANEL
AVE DE SUFFREN
AVE S DE SACY
AVE ELISEE RECLUS
RUE DU GAL CAMOU
RUE DU MAL DU HARISPE
PLACE DU GENERAL GOURAUD
RUE DE L'EXPOSITION
RUE DU GROS CAILLOU
RUE AUGEREAU
Tour Eiffel
AVE GUSTAVE EIFFEL
AVE E POUVILLON
AVE BARBEY D'AUREVILLY
RUE DE GRENELLE
RUE VALADON
PGE DE L'UNION
CHAMP DE MARS
RUE DUVIVIER
RUE CLER
RUE BOSQUET
Champ de Mars - Tour Eiffel
Stade Emile Antboine
AVE OCTAVE GREARD
PARC DU CHAMP DE MARS
PLACE JACQUES RUEFF
ALLEE BOUVARD
AVENUE ANATOLE FRANCE
AVENUE PIERRE LOTI
RUE MARINONI
AVE EMILE DESCHANEL
RUE DU BOURDONNAIS
RUE DU GEN LAMBERT
AVENUE DE LA BOURDONNAIS
ALLEE LE COUVREUR
RUE JEAN REY
AVENUE DU DR BROUARDEL
AVENUE J THOMY THIERRY
AVENUE CHARLES FLOQUET
AVENUE CHARLES RISLER
RUE SAVORGNAN DE BRAZZA
AVENUE F LE PLAY
Ecole Militaire
PLACE DE L'ECOLE MILITAIRE
AVENUE DE LA MOTTE PICQUET
AVE DUQUESNE
RUE DE LA FEDERATION
RUE DU CAP SCOTT
RUE DESAIX
RUE ALEXIS CARREL
RUE CHAMPFLEURY
AVENUE DU GEN. DETRIE
AVENUE DE SUFFREN
PLACE JOFFRE
RUE SAINT SAENS
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BOULEVARD DE GRENELLE
RUE DE PRESLES
PGE DU GUESCLIN
RUE JEAN CARRIES
AVE E ACOLLAS
RUE DUPLEIX
Village Suisse
Ecole Militaire
AVENUE DE LOWENDAL
RUE CLODION
RUE DANIEL STERN
RUE DU DOCTEUR FINLAY
PLACE DUPLEIX
PLACE DU CARD AMETTE
RUE ALASSEUR
AVENUE DE CHAMPAUBERT
PLACE DE FONTENOY
AVENUE DE SAXE
RUE HUMBLOT
Dupleix
RUE AUGUSTE BARTOLDI
RUE VIALA
RUE LOURMEL
RUE B DUSSANE
Dupleix
RUE DU SOUDAN
RUE PONDICHÉRY
RUE DU GEN DE LARMINAT
RUE D'OUESSANT
AVENUE DE LA MOTTE PICQUET
RUE DU GEN. DE CASTELNAU
RUE DE LA CAVALERIE
RUE DU LAOS
RUE DE L'ABBE ROGER DERRY
AVENUE DE SUFFREN
AVENUE DE LOWENDAL
UNESCO
RUE JUGE
VILLA DE GRENELLE
RUE VIOLET
RUE TIPHAINE
RUE FALLEMPIN
La Motte Picquet Grenelle
RUE DE L'AVRE
RUE DU COMMERCE
RUE LETELLIER
Lycée Technique Roger Verlomme
RUE DE LOURMEL
RUE FONDARY
RUE DU THEATRE
RUE FREMICOURT
PLACE CAMBRONNE
Cambronne
SQUARE CAMBRONNE
RUE ALEXANDRE CABANEL
SQUARE LOWENDAL
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RUE MARIO NIKIS
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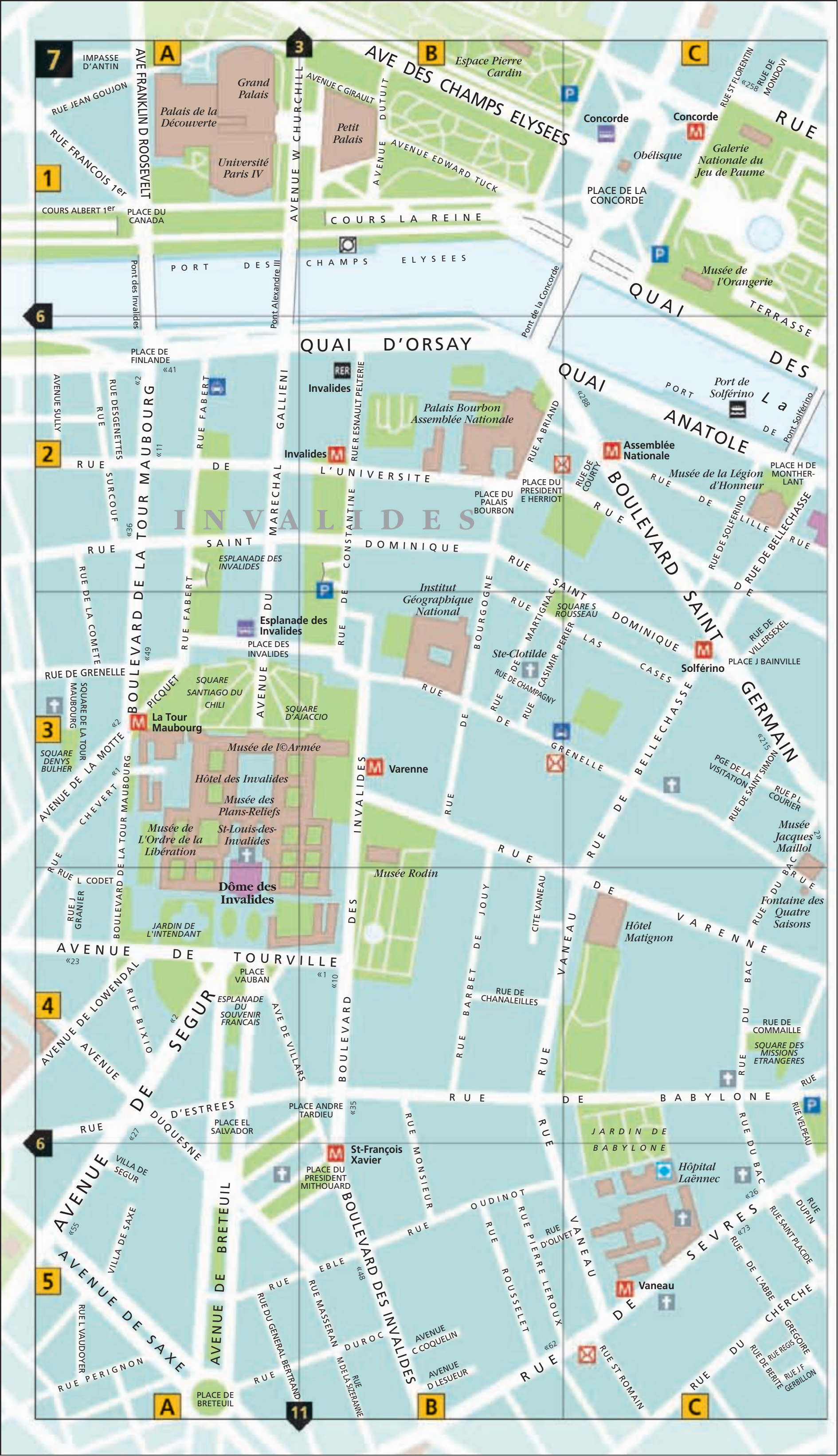
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Palais de la Découverte
Université Paris IV
AVENUE W CHURCHILL
AVENUE C GIRAULT
Petit Palais
DUTUIT
AVENUE
AVENUE EDWARD TUCK
AVE DES CHAMPS ELYSEES
Espace Pierre Cardin
Concorde
Obélisque
Galerie Nationale du Jeu de Paume
RUE ST FLORENTIN
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PLACE DE LA CONCORDE
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COURS ALBERT 1er
PLACE DU CANADA
COURS LA REINE
PORT DES CHAMPS ELYSEES
Pont des Invalides
Pont Alexandre III
Pont de la Concorde
QUAI
Musée de l'Orangerie
TERRASSE
DES
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QUAI D'ORSAY
PLACE DE FINLANDE
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AVENUE SULLY
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RUE
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GALLIENI
Invalides
RER
RUE R ESNAULT PELTERIE
Palais Bourbon Assemblée Nationale
QUAI
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PORT
Port de Solférino
La
DE
Pont Solférino
ANATOLE
RUE A BRIAND
Assemblée Nationale
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RUE
DE
L'UNIVERSITE
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SURCOUF
BOULEVARD DE LA TOUR MAUBOURG
MARECHAL
CONSTANTINE
PLACE DU PALAIS BOURBON
PLACE DU PRESIDENT E HERRIOT
RUE DE COURTY
RUE
Musée de la Légion d'Honneur
DE
PLACE H DE MONTHERLANT
RUE DE SOLFERINO
LILLE
RUE DE BELLECHASSE
RUE
INVALIDES
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RUE
SAINT
DOMINIQUE
ESPLANADE DES INVALIDES
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BOULEVARD SAINT GERMAIN
RUE DE LA COMETE
DU
DE
Institut Géographique National
BOURGOGNE
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SAINT
SQUARE S ROUSSEAU
DOMINIQUE
RUE DE VILLERSEXEL
Esplanade des Invalides
PLACE DES INVALIDES
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MARTIGNAC
LAS
CASES
Solférino
PLACE J BAINVILLE
RUE DE GRENELLE
Ste-Clotilde
RUE DE CHAMPAGNY
CASIMIR PERIER
SQUARE SANTIAGO DU CHILI
PICQUET
AVENUE
SQUARE D'AJACCIO
SQUARE DE LA TOUR MAUBOURG
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DE
BELLECHASSE
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La Tour Maubourg
GRENELLE
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AVENUE DE LA MOTTE
Musée de l'©Armée
Varenne
PGE DE LA VISITATION
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SQUARE DENYS BULHER
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CHEVERT
Hôtel des Invalides
INVALIDES
RUE
RUE P L COURIER
Musée des Plans-Reliefs
DE
Musée Jacques Maillol
Musée de L'Ordre de la Libération
St-Louis-des-Invalides
BOULEVARD DE LA TOUR MAUBOURG
RUE
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RUE DU BAC
Dôme des Invalides
Musée Rodin
DE
VARENNE
RUE J GRANIER
JARDIN DE L'INTENDANT
DES
JOUY
CITE VANEAU
VANEAU
Hôtel Matignon
Fontaine des Quatre Saisons
AVENUE DE TOURVILLE
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PLACE VAUBAN
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BARBET
RUE DE CHANALEILLES
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RUE BIXIO
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SEGUR
ESPLANADE DU SOUVENIR FRANCAIS
AVE DE VILLARS
BOULEVARD
RUE
RUE
DU
RUE DE COMMAILLE
SQUARE DES MISSIONS ETRANGERES
RUE
AVENUE
DE
RUE DE BABYLONE
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D'ESTREES
PLACE ANDRE TARDIEU
«35
RUE
RUE VELPEAU
6
RUE
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DUQUESNE
PLACE EL SALVADOR
RUE MONSIEUR
JARDIN DE BABYLONE
RUE DU BAC
VILLA DE SEGUR
St-François Xavier
PLACE DU PRESIDENT MITHOUARD
Hôpital Laënnec
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AVENUE
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BRETEUIL
OUDINOT
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VANEAU
RUE DUPIN
VILLA DE SAXE
RUE ROUSSELET
RUE PIERRE LEROUX
RUE D'OLIVET
SEVRES
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AVENUE DE SAXE
AVENUE DE BRETEUIL
RUE EBLE
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BOULEVARD DES INVALIDES
RUE DE L'ABBE
Vaneau
DE
CHERCHE
RUE DU GENERAL BERTRAND
RUE MASSERAN
DUROC
AVENUE C COQUELIN
GREGOIRE
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RUE ST ROMAIN
DU
RUE DE BERITE
RUE J F GERBILLON
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RUE
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AVENUE D LESUEUR
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PLACE DE BRETEUIL
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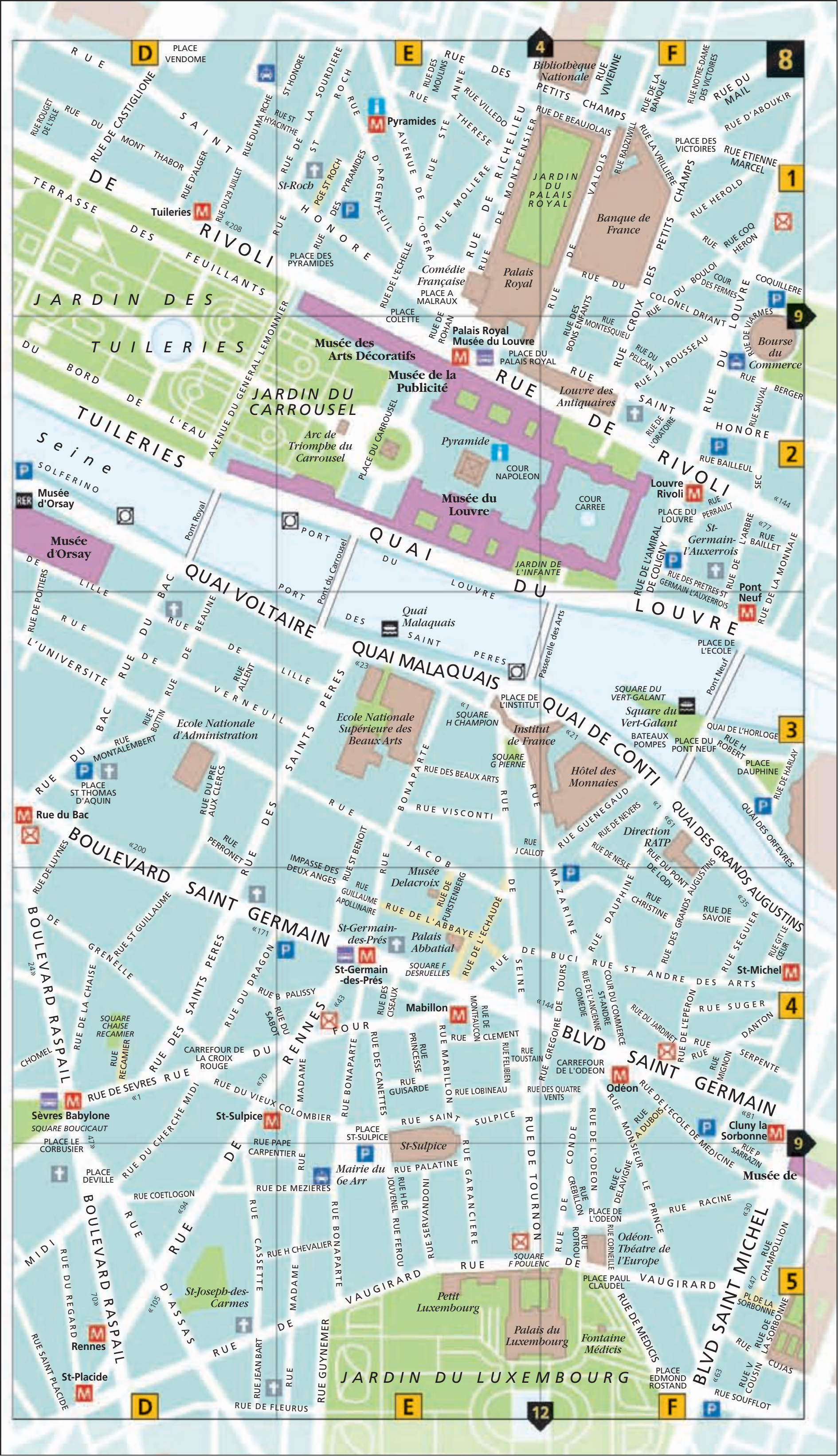
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PLACE VENDOME
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RUE DU MONT THABOR
RUE D'ALGER
RUE DU 29 JUILLET
RUE DU MARCHE ST HONORE
RUE ST HYACINTHE
RUE DE LA SOURDIERE
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St-Roch
PGE ST ROCH
RUE DES PYRAMIDES
Pyramides
AVENUE DE L'OPERA
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RUE DU MAIL
RUE D'ABOUKIR
PLACE DES VICTOIRES
RUE ETIENNE MARCEL
RUE RADZIWILL
RUE LA VRILLIERE
JARDIN DU PALAIS ROYAL
RUE DE VALOIS
Banque de France
RUE HEROLD
RUE COQ HERON
RUE COQUILLERE
Palais Royal
Comédie Française
PLACE A MALRAUX
PLACE COLETTE
RUE DE L'ECHELLE
PLACE DES PYRAMIDES
Tuileries
TERRASSE DES FEUILLANTS
RUE DE RIVOLI
«208
JARDIN DES TUILERIES
RUE DU BOULOI
COUR DES FERMES
RUE CROIX DES PETITS CHAMPS
RUE DU COLONEL DRIANT
RUE DU LOUVRE
RUE DE VIARMES
Bourse du Commerce
RUE DES BONS ENFANTS
RUE MONTESQUIEU
RUE DU PELICAN
RUE J J ROUSSEAU
RUE DE ROHAN
Palais Royal Musée du Louvre
PLACE DU PALAIS ROYAL
Musée des Arts Décoratifs
Musée de la Publicité
RUE SAINT HONORE
Louvre des Antiquaires
RUE BERGER
RUE SAUVAL
RUE DE L'ORATOIRE
QUAI DU BORD DE L'EAU
QUAI DES TUILERIES
AVENUE DU GENERAL LEMONNIER
JARDIN DU CARROUSEL
Arc de Triomphe du Carrousel
PLACE DU CARROUSEL
Pyramide
COUR NAPOLEON
Musée du Louvre
COUR CARREE
RUE BAILLEUL
Louvre Rivoli
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«144
RUE PERRAULT
PLACE DU LOUVRE
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«77
RUE BAILLET
RUE DE LA MONNAIE
RUE DE L'AMIRAL DE COLIGNY
RUE DES PRETRES ST GERMAIN L'AUXERROIS
Seine
SOLFERINO
Musée d'Orsay
Musée d'Orsay
Pont Royal
PORT DU LOUVRE
Pont du Carrousel
QUAI DU LOUVRE
JARDIN DE L'INFANTE
Pont Neuf
PLACE DE L'ECOLE
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PORT DES SAINTS PERES
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«23
RUE DES SAINTS PERES
PLACE DE L'INSTITUT
Institut de France
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QUAI DE CONTI
SQUARE DU VERT-GALANT
Square du Vert-Galant
BATEAUX POMPES
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Pont Neuf
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RUE H ROBERT
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Ecole Nationale Supérieure des Beaux Arts
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Hôtel des Monnaies
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RUE DE SEINE
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RUE GUENEGAUD
RUE DE NEVERS
«1
«61
Direction RATP
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RUE DU PONT DE LODI
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Ecole Nationale d'Administration
RUE S BOTTIN
RUE MONTALEMBERT
PLACE ST THOMAS D'AQUIN
RUE DU PRE AUX CLERCS
Rue du Bac
RUE PERRONET
«200
RUE JACOB
RUE J CALLOT
BOULEVARD SAINT GERMAIN
RUE DE LUYNES
IMPASSE DES DEUX ANGES
RUE ST BENOIT
RUE GUILLAUME APOLLINAIRE
Musée Delacroix
RUE DE FURSTENBERG
RUE DE L'ABBAYE
RUE DE L'ECHAUDE
RUE DAUPHINE
RUE CHRISTINE
RUE DES GRANDS AUGUSTINS
RUE DE SAVOIE
«35
RUE SEGUIER
RUE GIT LE COEUR
BOULEVARD RASPAIL
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RUE ST GUILLAUME
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St-Germain-des-Prés
Palais Abbatial
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RUE DE BUCI
RUE ST ANDRE DES ARTS
St-Michel
RUE SUGER
RUE DU DRAGON
RUE B PALISSY
RUE DU SABOT
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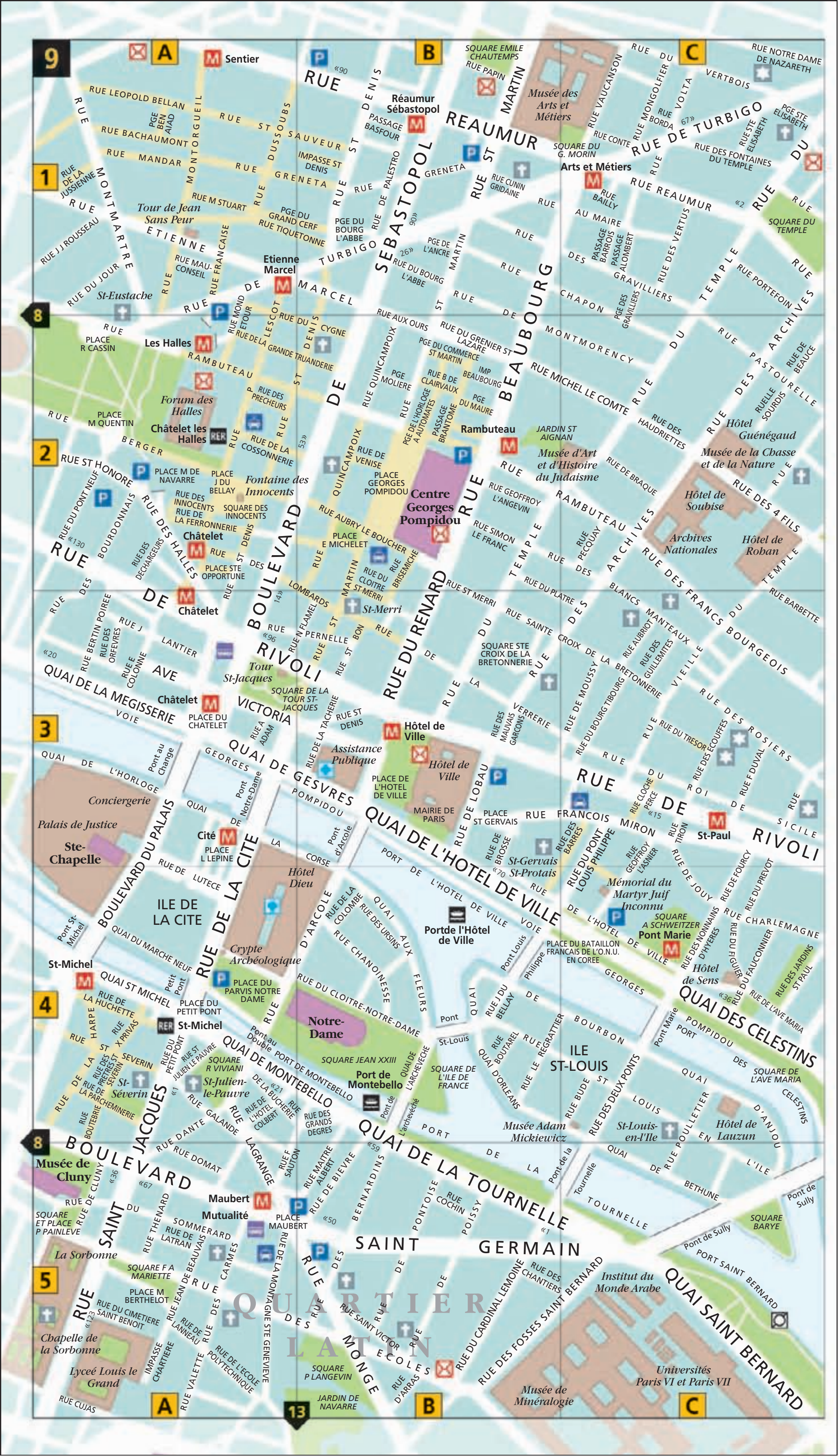
Mabillon
RUE DE MONTFAUCON
RUE CLEMENT
«144
RUE GREGOIRE DE TOURS
RUE DE L'ANCIENNE COMEDIE
COUR DU COMMERCE ST-ANDRE
RUE DU JARDINET
RUE DE L'EPERON
RUE DANTON
RUE SERPENTE
RUE MIGNON
RUE DE LA CHAISE
SQUARE CHAISE RECAMIER
RUE RECAMIER
RUE DES SAINTS PERES
CARREFOUR DE LA CROIX ROUGE
RUE DU FOUR
«43
RUE DE RENNES
RUE BONAPARTE
RUE DES CANETTES
RUE PRINCESSE
RUE MABILLON
RUE FELIBIEN
RUE TOUSTAIN
CARREFOUR DE L'ODEON
BLVD SAINT GERMAIN
Odéon
CHOMEL
24»
RUE DE SEVRES
«1
«70
RUE DU VIEUX COLOMBIER
RUE MADAME
RUE GUISARDE
RUE LOBINEAU
RUE DES QUATRE VENTS
RUE DE L'ECOLE DE MEDECINE
RUE A DUBOIS
«81
Cluny la Sorbonne
RUE P SARRAZIN
Sèvres Babylone
SQUARE BOUCICAUT
PLACE LE CORBUSIER
47»
RUE DU CHERCHE MIDI
St-Sulpice
RUE PAPE CARPENTIER
PLACE ST-SULPICE
RUE SAINT SULPICE
St-Sulpice
Mairie du 6e Arr
RUE PALATINE
RUE GARANCIERE
RUE DE TOURNON
RUE DE CONDE
RUE DE L'ODEON
RUE C DELAVIGNE
RUE MONSIEUR LE PRINCE
Musée de
PLACE DEVILLE
RUE COETLOGON
RUE DE MEZIERES
RUE H DE JOUVENEL
RUE FEROU
RUE SERVANDONI
RUE CREBILLON
PLACE DE L'ODEON
RUE RACINE
«30
BLVD SAINT MICHEL
RUE CHAMPOLLION
«94
RUE D'ASSAS
RUE CASSETTE
RUE H CHEVALIER
SQUARE F POULENC
RUE DE ROTROU
RUE CORNEILLE
Odéon-Théatre de l'Europe
RUE DE VAUGIRARD
RUE DU MIDI
RUE DU REGARD
70»
«105
St-Joseph-des-Carmes
PLACE PAUL CLAUDEL
«47
PL DE LA SORBONNE
RUE DE LA SORBONNE
Petit Luxembourg
Palais du Luxembourg
Fontaine Médicis
RUE DE MEDICIS
Rennes
RUE JEAN BART
RUE GUYNEMER
PLACE EDMOND ROSTAND
«63
RUE V COUSIN
RUE CUJAS
St-Placide
RUE SAINT PLACIDE
RUE DE FLEURUS
JARDIN DU LUXEMBOURG
RUE SOUFFLOT

9
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Sentier
Réaumur Sébastopol
Arts et Métiers
Musée des Arts et Métiers
Square Emile Chautemps
Rue Papin
Rue du Vertbois
Rue Notre Dame de Nazareth
Rue Léopold Bellan
Rue Bachaumont
Rue Mandar
Rue Montorgueil
Rue St Sauveur
Rue Dussoubs
Impasse St Denis
Rue Greneta
Passage Basfour
Pge Ben Aiad
Rue de la Jussienne
Rue Montmartre
Rue M Stuart
Tour de Jean Sans Peur
Pge du Grand Cerf
Rue Tiquetonne
Pge du Bourg l'Abbé
Rue Palestro
Boulevard de Sébastopol
Rue Réaumur
Rue St Martin
Rue Cunin Gridaine
Rue Conté
Rue Volta
Rue Borda
Rue Montgolfier
Rue Vaucanson
Rue de Turbigo
Pge Ste Elisabeth
Rue Ste Elisabeth
Rue des Fontaines du Temple
Square du G. Morin
Rue Bailly
Rue au Maire
Passage Barrois
Passage Alombert
Rue des Vertus
Rue des Gravilliers
Rue Chapon
Pge des Gravilliers
Rue du Temple
Square du Temple
Rue Portefoin
Rue des Archives
Rue J J Rousseau
Rue Etienne Marcel
Rue Mauconseil
Rue Française
Etienne Marcel
Pge de l'Ancre
Rue du Bourg l'Abbé
Rue du Jour
St-Eustache
Rue Mondétour
Rue du Cygne
Rue aux Ours
Rue du Grenier St Lazare
Pge du Commerce St Martin
Rue de Montmorency
Rue Michel le Comte
Rue Pastourelle
Rue de Beauce
Rue Charlot
Place R Cassin
Les Halles
Rue Rambuteau
Rue de la Grande Truanderie
Rue Lescot
Rue St Denis
Rue Quincampoix
Pge Molière
Rue B de Clairvaux
Imp Beaubourg
Pge du Maure
Rue Beaubourg
Rue des Haudriettes
Ruelle Sourdis
Forum des Halles
Place M Quentin
Rue Berger
Châtelet les Halles
Rue des Prêcheurs
Rue de la Cossonnerie
Pge de l'Horloge à Automates
Passage Brantôme
Rambuteau
Jardin St Aignan
Musée d'Art et d'Histoire du Judaïsme
Hôtel Guénégaud
Musée de la Chasse et de la Nature
Rue St Honoré
Place M de Navarre
Place J du Bellay
Fontaine des Innocents
Rue de Venise
Place Georges Pompidou
Centre Georges Pompidou
Rue de Braque
Hôtel de Soubise
Rue des 4 Fils
Rue du Pont Neuf
Rue Bourdonnais
Rue des Halles
Rue des Innocents
Rue de la Ferronnerie
Square des Innocents
Rue Geoffroy l'Angevin
Rue Rambuteau
Rue Simon le Franc
Rue Pecquay
Archives Nationales
Hôtel de Rohan
Rue des Déchargeurs
Châtelet
Place Ste Opportune
Rue Aubry le Boucher
Place E Michelet
Rue du Cloître St Merri
Rue Brisemiche
Rue des Lombards
Rue du Renard
Rue St Merri
Rue du Plâtre
Rue des Blancs Manteaux
Rue des Francs Bourgeois
Rue Barbette
Rue de Rivoli
Rue J Lantier
Rue Bertin Poirée
Rue des Orfèvres
Rue Colonne
Avenue Victoria
Boulevard
St-Merri
Rue Nicolas Flamel
Rue Pernelle
Rue St Bon
Rue Sainte Croix de la Bretonnerie
Square Ste Croix de la Bretonnerie
Rue de la Verrerie
Rue Aubriot
Rue des Guillemites
Rue Vieille du Temple
Quai de la Mégisserie
Tour St-Jacques
Square de la Tour St-Jacques
Rue St Denis
Rue de la Tacherie
Rue A Adam
Place du Châtelet
Hôtel de Ville
Rue des Mauvais Garçons
Rue de Moussy
Rue du Bourg Tibourg
Rue du Trésor
Rue des Écouffes
Rue des Rosiers
Rue F Duval
Quai de l'Horloge
Pont au Change
Quai de Gesvres
Assistance Publique
Hôtel de Ville
Place de l'Hôtel de Ville
Mairie de Paris
Rue de Lobau
Place St Gervais
Rue François Miron
Rue Cloche Perce
Rue du Roi de Sicile
Rue Tiron
St-Paul
Conciergerie
Palais de Justice
Ste-Chapelle
Boulevard du Palais
Pont Notre-Dame
Quai de la Corse
Cité
Place L Lépine
Rue de Lutèce
Rue de la Cité
Hôtel Dieu
Quai Georges Pompidou
Pont d'Arcole
Quai de l'Hôtel de Ville
Port de l'Hôtel de Ville
Rue de Brosse
St-Gervais St-Protais
Rue des Barres
Rue du Pont Louis Philippe
Rue Geoffroy l'Asnier
Rue de Jouy
Rue de Fourcy
Rue du Prévôt
Rue Charlemagne
Mémorial du Martyr Juif Inconnu
Ile de la Cité
Pont St-Michel
Quai du Marché Neuf
Rue d'Arcole
Rue de la Colombe
Rue des Ursins
Quai aux Fleurs
Rue Chanoinesse
Portde l'Hôtel de Ville
Pont Louis Philippe
Place du Bataillon Français de l'O.N.U. en Corée
Square A Schweitzer
Pont Marie
Rue des Nonnains d'Hyères
Rue du Figuier
Rue du Fauconnier
Hôtel de Sens
Rue des Jardins St Paul
Crypte Archéologique
Place du Parvis Notre Dame
Petit Pont
Rue du Cloître-Notre-Dame
Notre-Dame
Quai de Bourbon
Rue J du Bellay
Rue Le Regrattier
Quai des Célestins
Rue de l'Ave Maria
St-Michel
Quai St Michel
Place du Petit Pont
Rue de la Huchette
Rue X Privas
Rue de la Harpe
Rue St Séverin
Rue des Prêtres St Séverin
Rue de la Parcheminerie
Rue du Petit Pont
Rue St Julien le Pauvre
Square R Viviani
St-Julien-le-Pauvre
St-Séverin
Quai de Montebello
Pont au Double
Port de Montebello
Square Jean XXIII
Quai de l'Archevêché
Pont St-Louis
Square de l'Ile de France
Rue Boutarel
Quai d'Orléans
Ile St-Louis
Rue St Louis en l'Ile
Rue des Deux Ponts
Rue Budé
Port des Célestins
Square de l'Ave Maria
Quai des Célestins
Rue Galande
Rue de la Bûcherie
Rue de l'Hôtel Colbert
Rue des Grands Degrés
Pont de l'Archevêché
Quai de la Tournelle
Port de la Tournelle
Musée Adam Mickiewicz
St-Louis-en-l'Ile
Hôtel de Lauzun
Quai d'Anjou
Rue Poulletier
Quai de Béthune
Musée de Cluny
Boulevard Saint Germain
Rue Saint Jacques
Rue Dante
Rue Domat
Rue Lagrange
Rue F Sauton
Rue Maître Albert
Rue de Bièvre
Rue des Bernardins
Pont de la Tournelle
Pont de Sully
Square Barye
Rue de Cluny
Rue Thénard
Rue Sommerard
Maubert Mutualité
Place Maubert
Rue Cochin
Rue de Poissy
Rue de Pontoise
Square et Place P Painlevé
La Sorbonne
Rue de Latran
Rue Jean de Beauvais
Rue des Carmes
Rue de la Montagne Ste Geneviève
Rue des Écoles
Rue des Chantiers
Rue du Cardinal Lemoine
Rue des Fossés Saint Bernard
Institut du Monde Arabe
Port Saint Bernard
Quai Saint Bernard
Square F A Mariette
Place M Berthelot
Rue du Cimetière Saint Benoît
Rue de Lanneau
Rue Saint Victor
Quartier Latin
Chapelle de la Sorbonne
Lycée Louis le Grand
Rue Cujas
Impasse Chartière
Rue Valette
Rue de l'École Polytechnique
Rue Monge
Square P Langevin
Jardin de Navarre
Rue d'Arras
Musée de Minéralogie
Universités Paris VI et Paris VII
«90
67»
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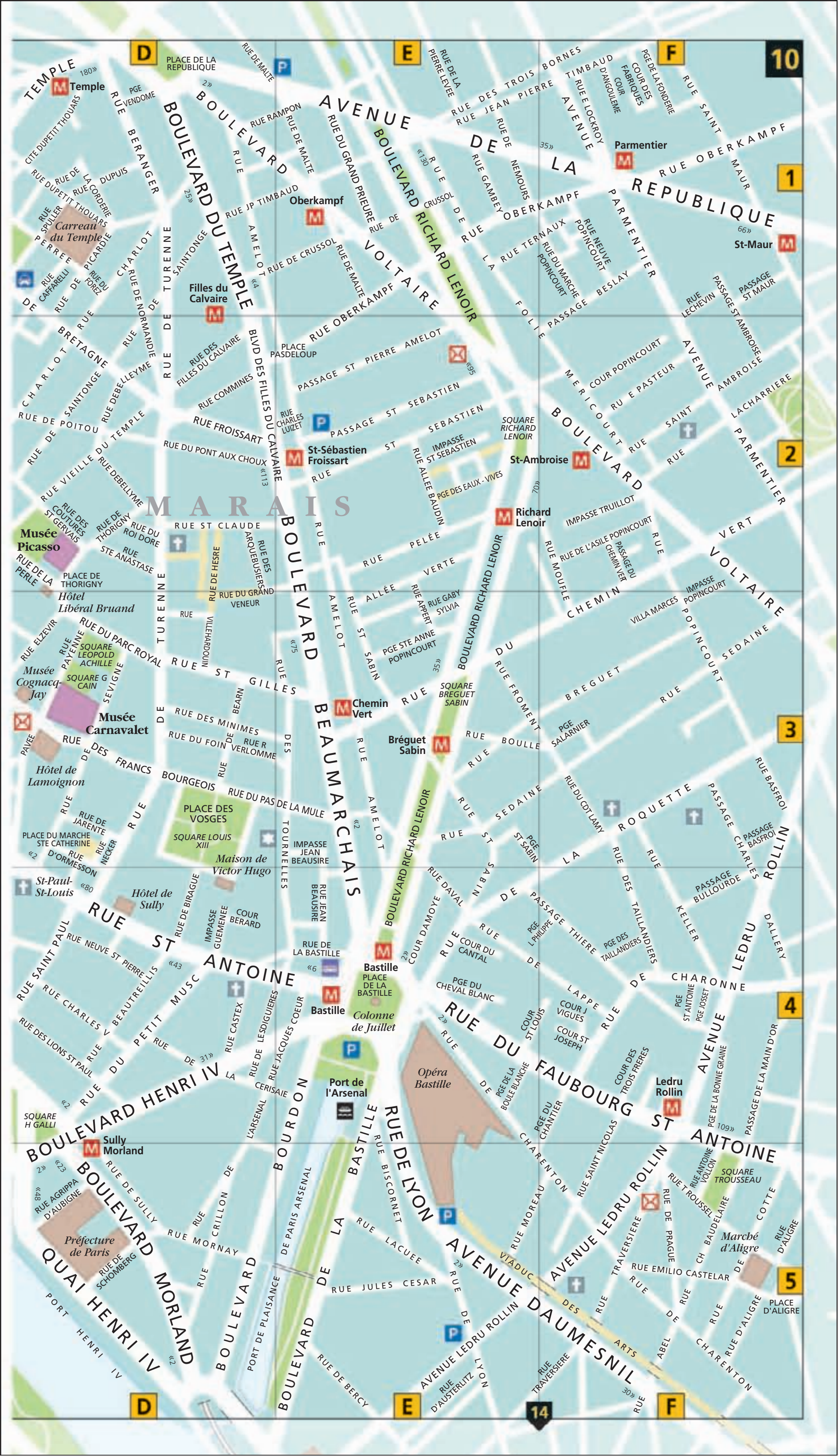
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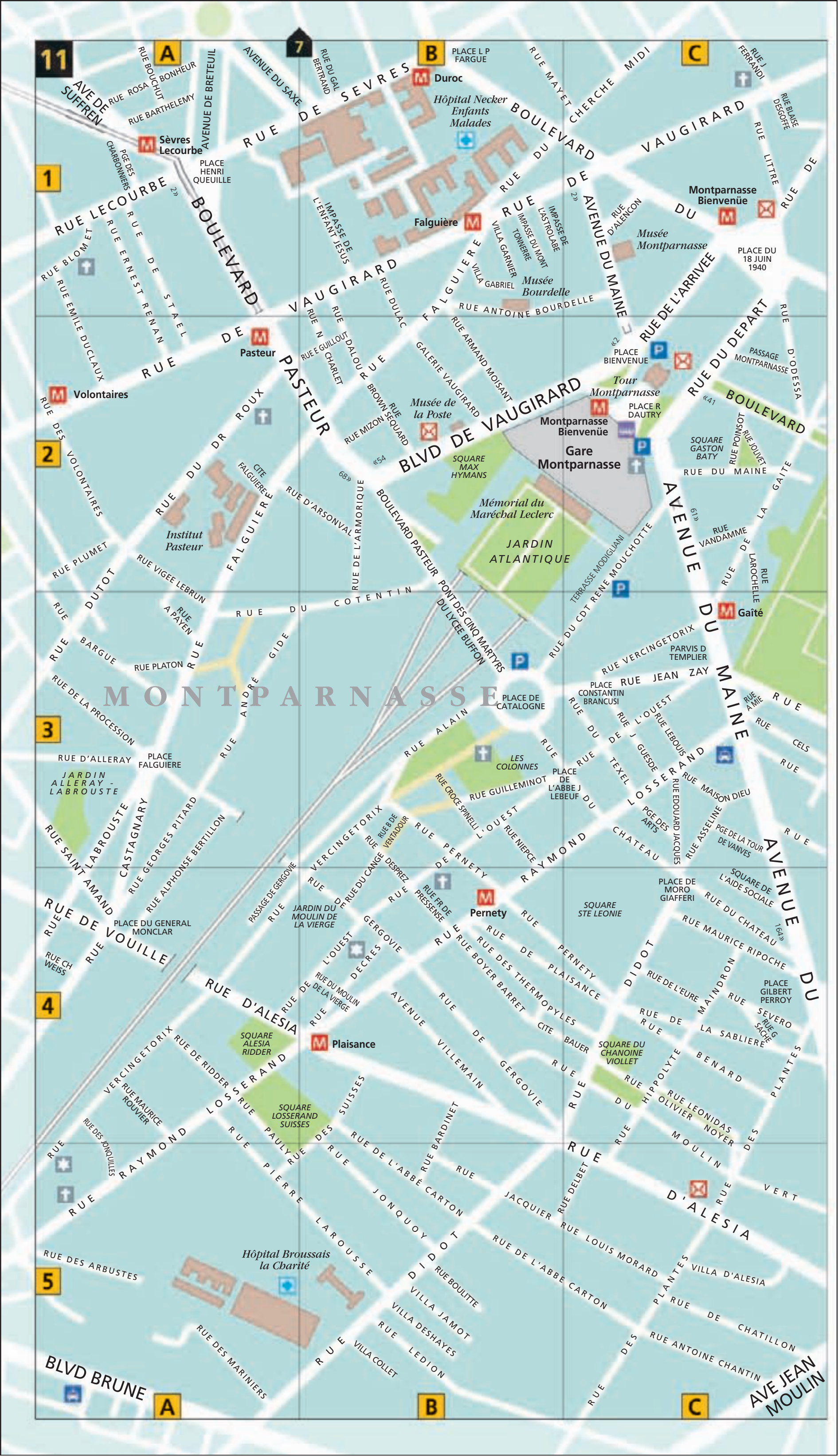
Temple
Place de la République
Parmentier
St-Maur
Oberkampf
Filles du Calvaire
St-Sébastien Froissart
St-Ambroise
Richard Lenoir
Chemin Vert
Bréguet Sabin
Bastille
Ledru Rollin
Sully Morland
MARAIS
Musée Picasso
Musée Cognacq-Jay
Musée Carnavalet
Hôtel Libéral Bruand
Hôtel de Lamoignon
Hôtel de Sully
Maison de Victor Hugo
Place des Vosges
Square Louis XIII
Carreau du Temple
St-Paul-St-Louis
Place de la Bastille
Colonne de Juillet
Opéra Bastille
Port de l'Arsenal
Préfecture de Paris
Marché d'Aligre
Place d'Aligre
Square Trousseau
Square Richard Lenoir
Square Bréguet Sabin
Square Léopold Achille
Square G Cain
Square H Galli
Place du Marché Ste Catherine
Place de Thorigny
Place Pasdeloup
Avenue de la République
Boulevard du Temple
Boulevard des Filles du Calvaire
Boulevard Beaumarchais
Boulevard Richard Lenoir
Boulevard Voltaire
Boulevard Henri IV
Boulevard Morland
Boulevard Bourdon
Boulevard de la Bastille
Quai Henri IV
Port Henri IV
Rue St Antoine
Rue du Faubourg St Antoine
Rue de Lyon
Avenue Daumesnil
Avenue Ledru Rollin
Avenue Parmentier
Rue de la Roquette
Rue de Charonne
Rue Oberkampf
Rue Amelot
Rue de Turenne
Rue Vieille du Temple
Rue des Francs Bourgeois
Rue St Gilles
Rue du Pas de la Mule
Rue de Bretagne
Rue Charlot
Rue de Saintonge
Rue Béranger
Rue Froissart
Rue du Pont aux Choux
Rue St Claude
Rue du Parc Royal
Rue des Minimes
Rue du Chemin Vert
Rue St Sabin
Rue Sedaine
Rue Popincourt
Rue St Maur
Rue Folie Méricourt
Rue Jean Pierre Timbaud
Rue des Trois Bornes
Rue de Crussol
Rue de Malte
Rue du Grand Prieuré
Rue St Sébastien
Passage St Pierre Amelot
Rue de la Perle
Rue de Sévigné
Rue Payenne
Rue Elzévir
Rue St Paul
Rue Charles V
Rue des Lions St Paul
Rue du Petit Musc
Rue Beautreillis
Rue de Sully
Rue Mornay
Rue Crillon
Rue Jules César
Rue de Bercy
Rue Biscornet
Rue Lacuée
Rue de Charenton
Rue de la Roquette
Rue Keller
Rue des Taillandiers
Rue de Lappe
Rue Daval
Rue Moreau
Rue Traversière
Rue Emilio Castelar
Rue Abel
Rue de Prague
Rue d'Aligre
Rue Cotte
Passage de la Main d'Or
Viaduc des Arts
Port de Plaisance de Paris Arsenal
Marais
Rue Jacques Coeur
Rue de Lesdiguières
Rue de la Cerisaie
Rue Castex
Rue de Birague
Rue de Jarente
Rue Necker
Rue d'Ormesson
Rue de Béarn
Rue des Tournelles
Rue Jean Beausire
Impasse Jean Beausire
Rue de la Bastille
Rue Lacharrière
Rue St Ambroise
Passage St Ambroise
Rue Moufle
Rue Froment
Rue Bréguet
Rue Boulle
Rue Basfroi
Rue Dallery
Rue Ledru Rollin
Cour Damoye
Rue Pelée
Allée Verte
Rue Ternaux
Rue Lechevin
Rue de Nemours
Rue Gambey
Rue de la Pierre Levée
Rue de Normandie
Rue Debelleyme
Rue de Poitou
Rue de Thorigny
Rue du Roi Doré
Rue Ste Anastase
Rue des Coutures St Gervais
Rue Villehardouin
Rue de Hesse
Rue du Grand Veneur
Rue des Arquebusiers
Rue Commines
Rue des Filles du Calvaire
Rue de Picardie
Rue Dupuis
Rue Dupetit Thouars
Rue de la Corderie
Rue Perrée
Rue Caffarelli
Rue du Forez
Rue Spuller
Cité Dupetit Thouars
Pge Vendôme
Rue de Malte
Rue Rampon
Rue Pasteur
Cour Popincourt
Villa Marces
Impasse Popincourt
Impasse Truillot
Rue de l'Asile Popincourt
Passage du Chemin Vert
Rue Gaby Sylvia
Rue Appert
Pge Ste Anne Popincourt
Rue Charles Luizet
Impasse St Sébastien
Rue Allée Baudin
Pge des Eaux-Vives
Pge Salarnier
Rue du Cdt Lamy
Passage Charles Dallery
Passage Basfroi
Passage Bullourde
Passage Thière
Pge L Philippe
Pge des Taillandiers
Cour du Cantal
Pge du Cheval Blanc
Cour J Viguès
Cour St Joseph
Cour St Louis
Cour des Trois Frères
Rue St Nicolas
Pge de la Boule Blanche
Pge du Chantier
Rue Antoine Vollon
Rue T Roussel
Rue Baudelaire
Pge St Antoine
Pge Josset
Pge de la Bonne Graine
Rue Agrippa d'Aubigné
Rue de Schomberg
Rue de l'Arsenal
Impasse Guéménée
Cour Bérard
Rue Neuve St Pierre
Rue du Foin
Rue R Verlomme
Rue Pavée
Rue Neuve Popincourt
Rue du Marché Popincourt
Passage Beslay
Passage St Maur
Rue Lockroy
Cour des Fabriques
Pge de la Fonderie
Cour d'Angoulême
Rue Ménilmontant

11
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MONTPARNASSE
Sèvres Lecourbe
Duroc
Falguière
Pasteur
Volontaires
Montparnasse Bienvenüe
Gaîté
Pernety
Plaisance
Hôpital Necker Enfants Malades
Institut Pasteur
Musée Montparnasse
Musée Bourdelle
Musée de la Poste
Tour Montparnasse
Gare Montparnasse
Mémorial du Maréchal Leclerc
JARDIN ATLANTIQUE
SQUARE MAX HYMANS
Hôpital Broussais la Charité
AVE DE SUFFREN
RUE BOUCHUT
RUE ROSA BONHEUR
RUE BARTHELEMY
AVENUE DE BRETEUIL
AVENUE DU SAXE
RUE DU GAL BERTRAND
RUE DE SEVRES
PLACE L P FARGUE
RUE MAYET
RUE J FERRANDI
RUE DU CHERCHE MIDI
BOULEVARD DU MONTPARNASSE
RUE DE VAUGIRARD
RUE BLAISE DESGOFFE
RUE LITTRE
RUE DE RENNES
PLACE HENRI QUEUILLE
PGE DES CHARBONNIERS
BOULEVARD PASTEUR
RUE LECOURBE
RUE BLOMET
RUE ERNEST RENAN
RUE DE STAEL
RUE EMILE DUCLAUX
IMPASSE DE L'ENFANT JESUS
RUE FALGUIERE
VILLA GARNIER
IMPASSE DU MONT TONNERRE
IMPASSE DE L'ASTROLABE
VILLA GABRIEL
RUE D'ALENCON
AVENUE DU MAINE
PLACE DU 18 JUIN 1940
RUE DE L'ARRIVEE
RUE ANTOINE BOURDELLE
RUE DULAC
RUE DE VAUGIRARD
RUE N CHARLET
RUE E GUILLOUT
RUE DALOU
GALERIE VAUGIRARD
RUE ARMAND MOISANT
PLACE BIENVENUE
RUE DU DEPART
PASSAGE MONTPARNASSE
RUE D'ODESSA
RUE DES VOLONTAIRES
RUE DU DR ROUX
RUE BROWN SEQUARD
RUE MIZON
BLVD DE VAUGIRARD
PLACE R DAUTRY
BOULEVARD EDGAR QUINET
RUE POINSOT
RUE JOLIVET
SQUARE GASTON BATY
RUE DU MAINE
RUE DE LA GAITE
CITE FALGUIERE
RUE D'ARSONVAL
RUE DE L'ARMORIQUE
BOULEVARD PASTEUR
RUE VANDAMME
RUE DE LAROCHELLE
AVENUE DU MAINE
RUE PLUMET
RUE DUTOT
RUE VIGEE LEBRUN
TERRASSE MODIGLIANI
RUE DU CDT RENE MOUCHOTTE
RUE DU COTENTIN
PONT DES CINQ MARTYRS DU LYCEE BUFFON
RUE A PAYEN
RUE BARGUE
RUE PLATON
RUE ANDRE GIDE
RUE VERCINGETORIX
PARVIS D TEMPLIER
RUE JEAN ZAY
PLACE CONSTANTIN BRANCUSI
PLACE DE CATALOGNE
RUE DE LA PROCESSION
RUE D'ALLERAY
PLACE FALGUIERE
JARDIN ALLERAY - LABROUSTE
RUE ALAIN
LES COLONNES
RUE DU TEXEL
RUE DE L'OUEST
RUE J GUESDE
RUE LEBOUIS
RUE A MIE
RUE DES CELS
RUE CASTAGNARY
RUE LABROUSTE
RUE GEORGES PITARD
RUE ALPHONSE BERTILLON
RUE SAINT AMAND
RUE GUILLEMINOT
PLACE DE L'ABBE J LEBEUF
RUE LOSSERAND
RUE MAISON DIEU
RUE CROCE SPINELLI
RUE NIEPCE
RUE RAYMOND LOSSERAND
PGE DES ARTS
RUE EDOUARD JACQUES
RUE ASSELINE
PGE DE LA TOUR DE VANVES
RUE VERCINGETORIX
RUE B DE VENTADOUR
RUE DU CANGE
RUE DESPREZ
RUE PERNETY
RUE FR DE PRESSENSE
RUE DU CHATEAU
PLACE DE MORO GIAFFERI
SQUARE DE L'AIDE SOCIALE
PASSAGE DE GERGOVIE
JARDIN DU MOULIN DE LA VIERGE
SQUARE STE LEONIE
RUE MAURICE RIPOCHE
RUE DE VOUILLE
RUE CH WEISS
PLACE DU GENERAL MONCLAR
RUE DE GERGOVIE
RUE DECRES
RUE DE L'OUEST
RUE DU MOULIN DE LA VIERGE
RUE BOYER BARRET
RUE DES THERMOPYLES
RUE DE PLAISANCE
RUE DIDOT
RUE DE L'EURE
RUE MAINDRON
PLACE GILBERT PERROY
RUE SEVERO
RUE G SACHE
RUE D'ALESIA
AVENUE VILLEMAIN
RUE DE GERGOVIE
CITE BAUER
RUE DE LA SABLIERE
SQUARE ALESIA RIDDER
SQUARE DU CHANOINE VIOLLET
RUE BENARD
RUE DES PLANTES
RUE VERCINGETORIX
RUE DE RIDDER
RUE MAURICE ROUVIER
RUE HIPPOLYTE
RUE LEONIDAS
RUE OLIVIER NOYER
RUE DES JONQUILLES
RUE RAYMOND LOSSERAND
SQUARE LOSSERAND SUISSES
RUE DES SUISSES
RUE BARDINET
RUE DE L'ABBE CARTON
RUE DU MOULIN VERT
RUE PAULY
RUE PIERRE LAROUSSE
RUE JONQUOY
RUE JACQUIER
RUE DELBET
RUE LOUIS MORARD
RUE DE L'ABBE CARTON
RUE D'ALESIA
VILLA D'ALESIA
RUE DES ARBUSTES
RUE DIDOT
RUE BOULITTE
VILLA JAMOT
VILLA DESHAYES
RUE LEDION
RUE DE CHATILLON
RUE DES PLANTES
RUE ANTOINE CHANTIN
RUE DES MARINIERS
VILLA COLLET
BLVD BRUNE
AVE JEAN MOULIN
RUE DES PLANTES
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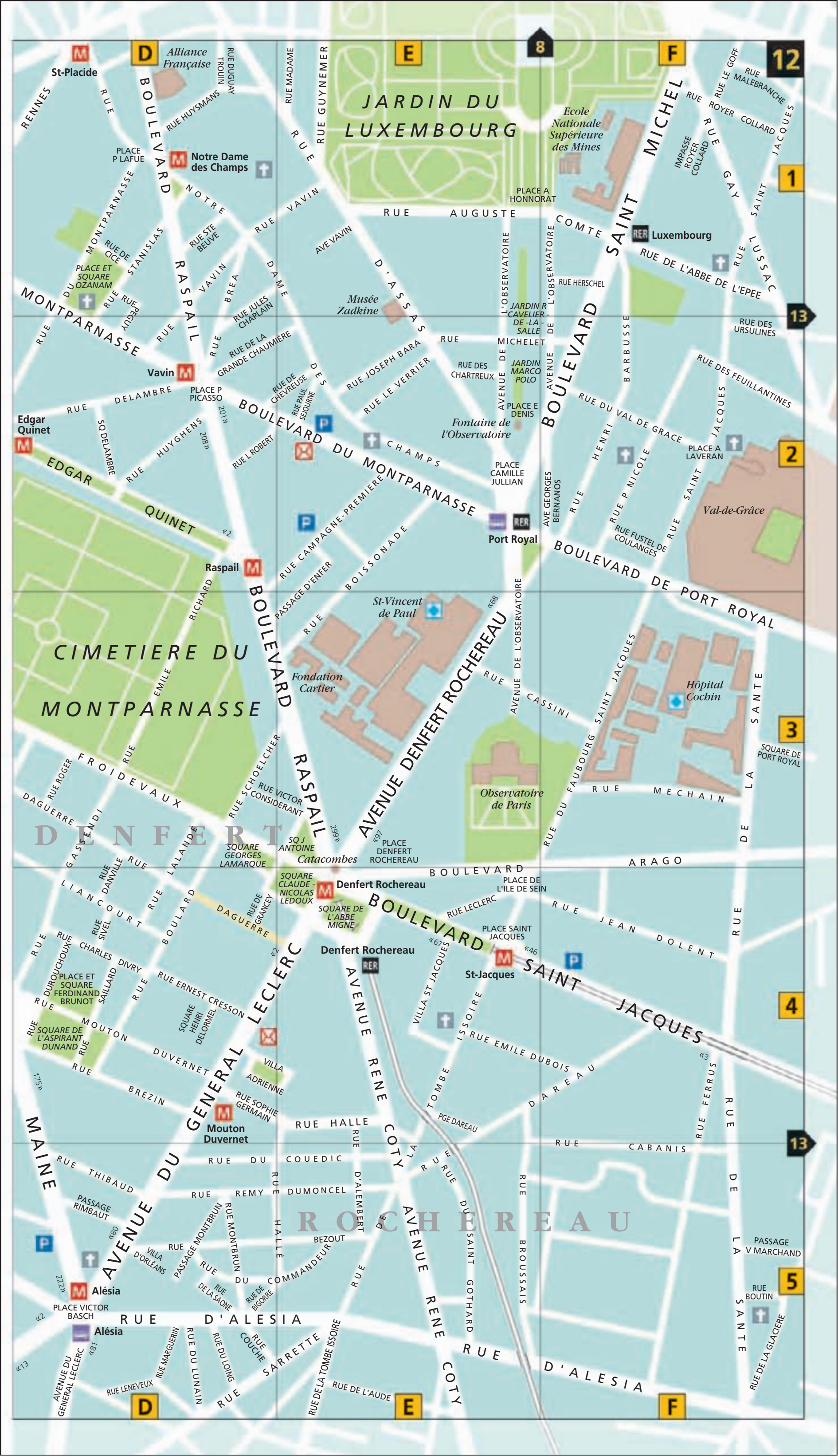
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JARDIN DU LUXEMBOURG
CIMETIERE DU MONTPARNASSE
DENFERT
ROCHEREAU
St-Placide
Alliance Française
Notre Dame des Champs
Ecole Nationale Supérieure des Mines
Luxembourg
Musée Zadkine
Vavin
Edgar Quinet
Raspail
Port Royal
Val-de-Grâce
St-Vincent de Paul
Fondation Cartier
Hôpital Cochin
Observatoire de Paris
Fontaine de l'Observatoire
Catacombes
Denfert Rochereau
Denfert Rochereau
St-Jacques
Mouton Duvernet
Alésia
Alésia
RENNES
RUE
BOULEVARD RASPAIL
RUE DUGUAY TROUIN
RUE HUYSMANS
RUE MADAME
RUE GUYNEMER
RUE VAVIN
NOTRE DAME DES CHAMPS
PLACE P LAFUE
MONTPARNASSE
RUE DE CICE
RUE STANISLAS
PLACE ET SQUARE OZANAM
RUE PEGUY
RUE STE BEUVE
RUE BREA
RUE JULES CHAPLAIN
RUE DE LA GRANDE CHAUMIÈRE
RUE DE CHEVREUSE
RUE PAUL SEJOURNE
RUE MONTPARNASSE
AVE VAVIN
RUE D'ASSAS
RUE AUGUSTE COMTE
PLACE A HONNORAT
BOULEVARD SAINT MICHEL
RUE DE L'ABBE DE L'EPEE
RUE LE GOFF
RUE MALEBRANCHE
RUE ROYER COLLARD
IMPASSE ROYER COLLARD
RUE GAY LUSSAC
RUE SAINT JACQUES
RUE HERSCHEL
AVENUE DE L'OBSERVATOIRE
JARDIN R CAVELIER - DE - LA - SALLE
RUE MICHELET
RUE DES CHARTREUX
JARDIN MARCO POLO
PLACE E DENIS
RUE JOSEPH BARA
RUE LE VERRIER
RUE DES URSULINES
RUE DES FEUILLANTINES
RUE BARBUSSE
RUE DU VAL DE GRACE
RUE HENRI BARBUSSE
RUE P NICOLE
PLACE A LAVERAN
RUE FUSTEL DE COULANGES
AVE GEORGES BERNANOS
PLACE CAMILLE JULLIAN
RUE DELAMBRE
PLACE P PICASSO
SQ DELAMBRE
RUE HUYGHENS
RUE L ROBERT
BOULEVARD DU MONTPARNASSE
RUE CAMPAGNE-PREMIERE
RUE DES CHAMPS
RUE BOISSONADE
BOULEVARD EDGAR QUINET
BOULEVARD DE PORT ROYAL
PASSAGE D'ENFER
RUE RICHARD
RUE EMILE
RUE CASSINI
AVENUE DENFERT ROCHEREAU
RUE SAINT JACQUES
RUE DU FAUBOURG SAINT JACQUES
RUE MECHAIN
RUE DE LA SANTE
SQUARE DE PORT ROYAL
RUE ROGER
RUE FROIDEVAUX
RUE DAGUERRE
RUE GASSENDI
RUE LALANDE
RUE SCHOELCHER
RUE VICTOR CONSIDERANT
SQ J ANTOINE
SQUARE GEORGES LAMARQUE
PLACE DENFERT ROCHEREAU
BOULEVARD ARAGO
RUE DANVILLE
RUE LIANCOURT
RUE BOULARD
RUE DE GRANCEY
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SQUARE DE L'ABBE MIGNE
PLACE DE L'ILE DE SEIN
RUE LECLERC
RUE JEAN DOLENT
PLACE SAINT JACQUES
BOULEVARD SAINT JACQUES
RUE SIVEL
RUE CHARLES DIVRY
RUE DUROUCHOUX
PLACE ET SQUARE FERDINAND BRUNOT
RUE SAILLARD
RUE ERNEST CRESSON
SQUARE HENRI DELORMEL
AVENUE DU GENERAL LECLERC
RUE MOUTON DUVERNET
SQUARE DE L'ASPIRANT DUNAND
VILLA ADRIENNE
RUE BREZIN
RUE SOPHIE GERMAIN
AVENUE RENE COTY
VILLA ST JACQUES
RUE DE LA TOMBE ISSOIRE
RUE EMILE DUBOIS
RUE DAREAU
PGE DAREAU
RUE FERRUS
RUE CABANIS
RUE HALLE
RUE DU COUEDIC
RUE REMY DUMONCEL
RUE D'ALEMBERT
RUE DU SAINT GOTHARD
RUE BROUSSAIS
PASSAGE V MARCHAND
RUE BOUTIN
RUE DE LA GLACIERE
MAINE
RUE THIBAUD
PASSAGE RIMBAUT
VILLA D'ORLÉANS
PASSAGE MONTBRUN
RUE MONTBRUN
RUE BEZOUT
RUE DU COMMANDEUR
RUE DE LA SAONE
RUE DE BIGORRE
PLACE VICTOR BASCH
RUE D'ALESIA
RUE COUCHE
RUE SARRETTE
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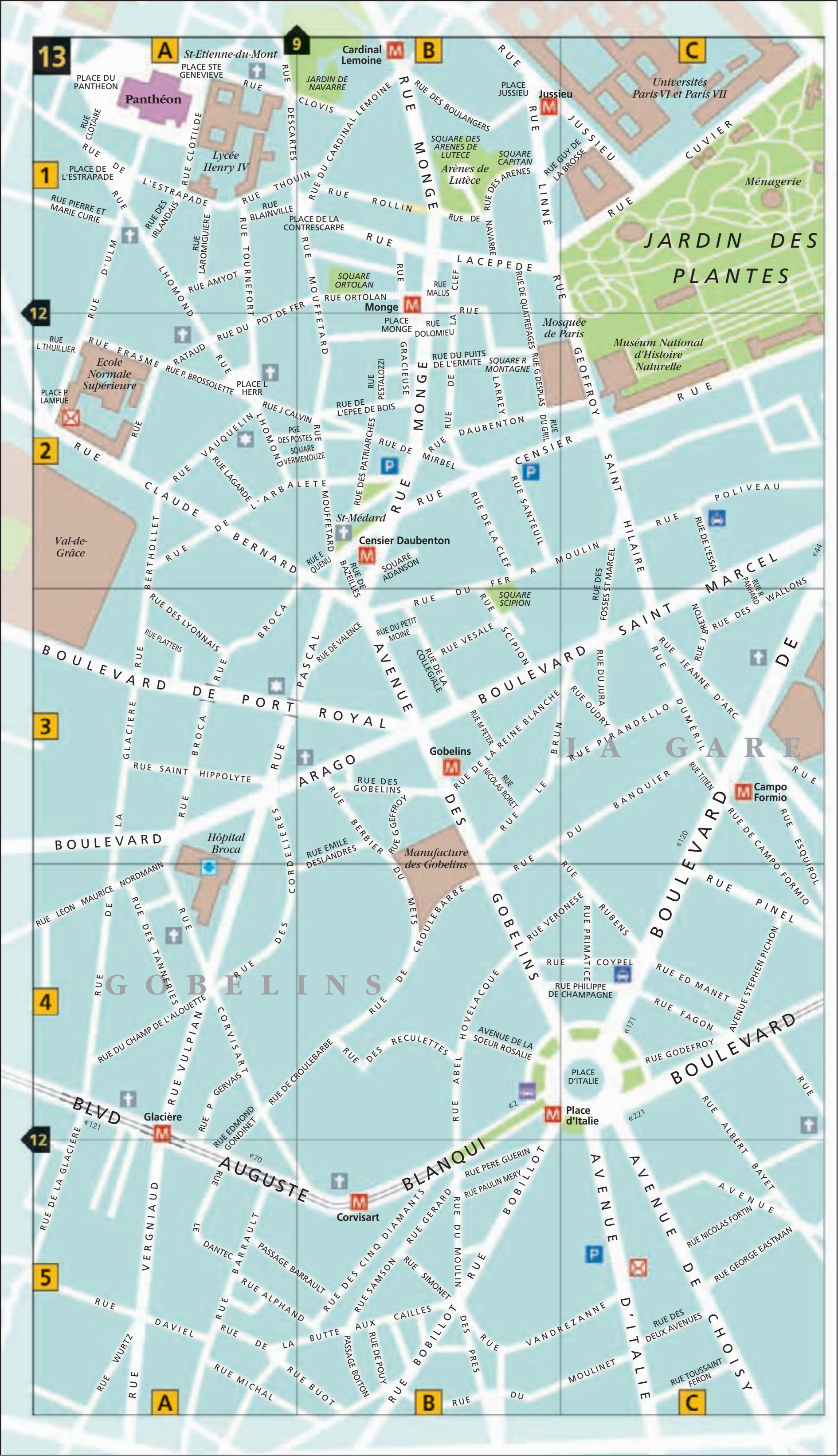
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St-Etienne-du-Mont
PLACE STE GENEVIEVE
PLACE DU PANTHEON
Panthéon
Cardinal Lemoine
JARDIN DE NAVARRE
RUE CLOVIS
RUE DESCARTES
RUE DU CARDINAL LEMOINE
RUE MONGE
RUE DES BOULANGERS
PLACE JUSSIEU
Jussieu
Universités Paris VI et Paris VII
RUE JUSSIEU
RUE CUVIER
RUE CLOTAIRE
RUE CLOTILDE
Lycée Henry IV
PLACE DE L'ESTRAPADE
RUE DE L'ESTRAPADE
RUE PIERRE ET MARIE CURIE
RUE DES IRLANDAIS
RUE LAROMIGUIERE
RUE THOUIN
RUE BLAINVILLE
PLACE DE LA CONTRESCARPE
RUE ROLLIN
SQUARE DES ARENES DE LUTECE
Arènes de Lutèce
SQUARE CAPITAN
RUE DES ARENES
RUE GUY DE LA BROSSE
RUE LINNÉ
Ménagerie
JARDIN DES PLANTES
RUE D'ULM
RUE LHOMOND
RUE AMYOT
RUE TOURNEFORT
RUE MOUFFETARD
SQUARE ORTOLAN
RUE ORTOLAN
RUE MALUS
RUE CLEF
RUE DE NAVARRE
RUE LACEPEDE
RUE DE QUATREFAGES
Monge
RUE DU POT DE FER
PLACE MONGE
RUE DOLOMIEU
RUE L THUILLIER
RUE ERASME
Ecole Normale Supérieure
RUE RATAUD
RUE P. BROSSOLETTE
PLACE L HERR
Mosquée de Paris
Muséum National d'Histoire Naturelle
RUE GEOFFROY SAINT HILAIRE
RUE DU PUITS DE L'ERMITE
SQUARE R MONTAGNE
RUE LARREY
RUE G DESPLAS
RUE DU GRIL
RUE GRACIEUSE
RUE PESTALOZZI
RUE DE L'EPEE DE BOIS
PLACE P LAMPUE
RUE J CALVIN
RUE VAUQUELIN
PGE DES POSTES
SQUARE VERMENOUZE
RUE DE MIRBEL
RUE DAUBENTON
RUE CENSIER
RUE LAGARDE
RUE L'ARBALETE
RUE DES PATRIARCHES
RUE POLIVEAU
RUE CLAUDE BERNARD
St-Médard
Censier Daubenton
RUE DE LA CLEF
RUE SANTEUIL
RUE DE L'ESSAI
Val-de-Grâce
RUE BERTHOLLET
RUE E QUENU
RUE DE BAZEILLES
SQUARE ADANSON
RUE DU FER A MOULIN
RUE DES FOSSES ST MARCEL
BOULEVARD SAINT MARCEL
RUE R PANHARD
RUE DES WALLONS
SQUARE SCIPION
RUE SCIPION
RUE DES LYONNAIS
RUE FLATTERS
RUE BROCA
RUE PASCAL
RUE DE VALENCE
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RUE JEANNE D'ARC
BOULEVARD DE PORT ROYAL
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RUE OUDRY
RUE M PETER
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RUE SAINT HIPPOLYTE
RUE ARAGO
RUE DES GOBELINS
Gobelins
RUE NICOLAS RORET
RUE BANQUIER
RUE TITIEN
Campo Formio
BOULEVARD DE L'HOPITAL
BOULEVARD ARAGO
Hôpital Broca
RUE DES CORDELIERES
RUE BERBIER DU METS
RUE G GEFFROY
RUE EMILE DESLANDRES
Manufacture des Gobelins
RUE DU BANQUIER
RUE DE CAMPO FORMIO
RUE ESQUIROL
RUE LEON MAURICE NORDMANN
RUE DES TANNERIES
RUE CROULEBARBE
RUE RUBENS
RUE VERONESE
RUE PINEL
RUE PRIMATICE
RUE COYPEL
RUE PHILIPPE DE CHAMPAGNE
RUE ED MANET
AVENUE STEPHEN PICHON
GOBELINS
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RUE CORVISART
RUE DE CROULEBARBE
RUE DES RECULETTES
RUE HOVELACQUE
AVENUE DE LA SOEUR ROSALIE
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RUE GODEFROY
BOULEVARD DE L'HOPITAL
PLACE D'ITALIE
RUE P GERVAIS
RUE ABEL
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Place d'Italie
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RUE EDMOND GONDINET
BLVD AUGUSTE BLANQUI
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Glacière
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RUE LE DANTEC
RUE PERE GUERIN
RUE PAULIN MERY
RUE BOBILLOT
RUE ALBERT BAYET
Corvisart
RUE DES CINQ DIAMANTS
RUE GERARD
RUE DU MOULINET
AVENUE D'ITALIE
AVENUE DE CHOISY
RUE BARRAULT
PASSAGE BARRAULT
RUE SAMSON
RUE SIMONET
RUE NICOLAS FORTIN
RUE GEORGE EASTMAN
RUE VERGNIAUD
RUE ALPHAND
RUE DAVIEL
RUE DE LA BUTTE AUX CAILLES
RUE DES PRES
RUE VANDREZANNE
RUE DES DEUX AVENUES
RUE WURTZ
RUE MICHAL
RUE BUOT
PASSAGE BOITON
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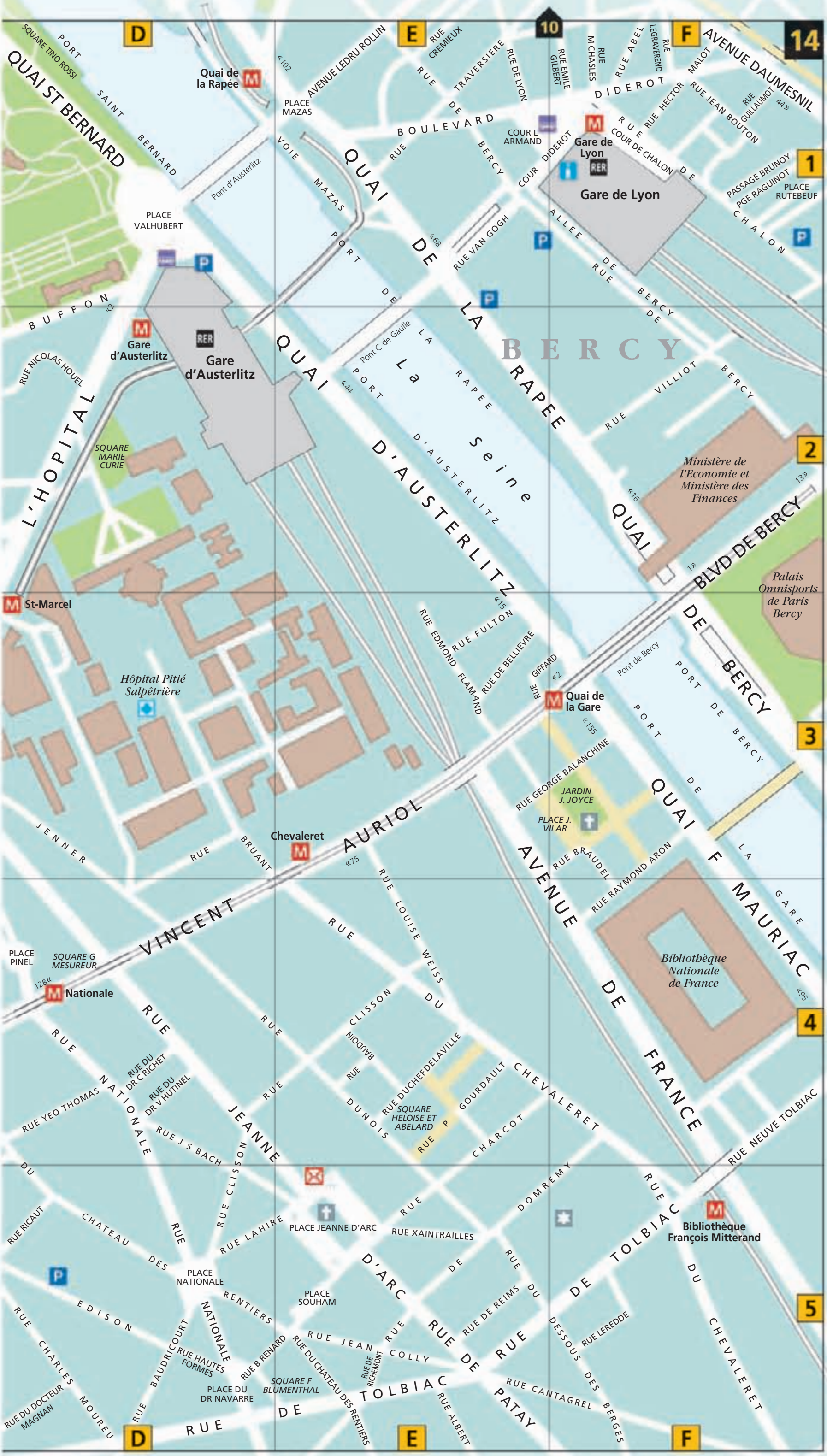
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QUAI ST BERNARD
SQUARE TINO ROSSI
PORT SAINT BERNARD
Quai de la Rapée
PLACE MAZAS
AVENUE LEDRU ROLLIN
RUE CREMIEUX
RUE TRAVERSIERE
RUE DE LYON
RUE EMILE GILBERT
RUE M CHASLES
RUE ABEL
RUE LEGRAVEREND
RUE MALOT
AVENUE DAUMESNIL
BOULEVARD DIDEROT
RUE HECTOR
RUE JEAN BOUTON
RUE GUILLAUMOT
RUE DE CHALON
COUR DE CHALON
COUR L ARMAND
COUR DIDEROT
Gare de Lyon
RER
PASSAGE BRUNOY
PGE RAGUINOT
PLACE RUTEBEUF
CHALON
Pont d'Austerlitz
VOIE MAZAS
QUAI DE LA RAPEE
RUE DE BERCY
RUE VAN GOGH
ALLEE DE BERCY
PLACE VALHUBERT
BUFFON
Gare d'Austerlitz
PORT DE LA RAPEE
Pont C de Gaulle
La Seine
BERCY
PORT D'AUSTERLITZ
QUAI D'AUSTERLITZ
RUE NICOLAS HOUEL
L'HOPITAL
SQUARE MARIE CURIE
RUE VILLIOT
BERCY
Ministère de l'Economie et Ministère des Finances
QUAI DE BERCY
BLVD DE BERCY
Palais Omnisports de Paris Bercy
St-Marcel
Hôpital Pitié Salpêtrière
RUE EDMOND FLAMAND
RUE FULTON
RUE DE BELLIEVRE
RUE GIFFARD
Quai de la Gare
Pont de Bercy
PORT DE BERCY
PORT DE LA GARE
RUE GEORGE BALANCHINE
JARDIN J. JOYCE
PLACE J. VILAR
QUAI F MAURIAC
AVENUE DE FRANCE
RUE BRAUDEL
RUE RAYMOND ARON
Bibliothèque Nationale de France
JENNER
RUE BRUANT
Chevaleret
BOULEVARD VINCENT AURIOL
RUE LOUISE WEISS
RUE DU CHEVALERET
PLACE PINEL
SQUARE G MESUREUR
Nationale
RUE NATIONALE
RUE YEO THOMAS
RUE DU DR C RICHET
RUE DU DR V HUTINEL
RUE J S BACH
RUE JEANNE D'ARC
RUE CLISSON
RUE BAUDION
RUE DUNOIS
RUE DUCHEFDELAVILLE
SQUARE HELOISE ET ABELARD
RUE P GOURDAULT
RUE CHARCOT
RUE NEUVE TOLBIAC
RUE DOMREMY
RUE DE TOLBIAC
Bibliothèque François Mitterand
RUE DU CHATEAU DES RENTIERS
RUE RICAUT
RUE LAHIRE
PLACE JEANNE D'ARC
RUE XAINTRAILLES
PLACE NATIONALE
PLACE SOUHAM
RUE EDISON
RUE DE REIMS
RUE DU DESSOUS DES BERGES
RUE LEREDDE
RUE CHARLES MOUREU
RUE BAUDRICOURT
RUE HAUTES FORMES
RUE B RENARD
RUE JEAN COLLY
RUE DE RICHEMONT
SQUARE F BLUMENTHAL
PLACE DU DR NAVARRE
RUE DU DOCTEUR MAGNAN
RUE DE TOLBIAC
RUE ALBERT
RUE DE PATAY
RUE CANTAGREL
RUE DU CHEVALERET
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ILE DE FRANCE

Set at the heart of France, with Paris as its hub, Ile de France extends well beyond the densely populated suburbs of the city. Its rich countryside incorporates a historic royal region of monumental splendour central to *"la gloire de la France."*

The region became a favorite with French royalty after François I transformed Fontainebleau into a Renaissance palace in 1528. Louis XIV kept the Ile de France as the political axis of the country when he started building Versailles in 1661. This Classical château created by the combined genius of Le Nôtre, Le Vau, Le Brun, and Jules Hardouin-Mansart is France's most visited sight. It stands as a monument to the power of the Sun King and is still used for state occasions. Rambouillet, closely linked with Louis XVI, is now the summer residence of the French president, while Malmaison was the favorite home of Empress Josephine. To the north, the Château d'Ecouen offers a showcase of Renaissance life and to the south Vaux-le-Vicomte boasts some of the loveliest formal gardens in France.

Nourished by the Seine and Marne rivers, the Ile de France is a patchwork of chalky plains, wheatfields and forests. The serene, poplar-lined avenues and rustic charm of the region have been an inspiration to painters such as Corot, Rousseau, Pissarro, and Cézanne.

SIGHTS AT A GLANCE

Châteaux and Museums

Château de Dampierre ⑧
Château de Fontainebleau ⑬
Château de Malmaison ⑤
Château de Rambouillet ⑨
Château de Sceaux ⑦
Château de Vaux-le-Vicomte ⑪
Château de Versailles ⑥
Musée National de la Renaissance ②

Towns

Provins ⑫
St-Germain-en-Laye ④

Abbeys and Churches

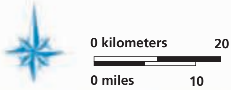
Abbaye de Royaumont ①
Basilique St-Denis ③

Theme Parks

Disneyland Resort Paris ⑩

KEY

🟨 Greater Paris
🟥 Central Paris
✈ International airport
— Highway
— Major road
— Minor road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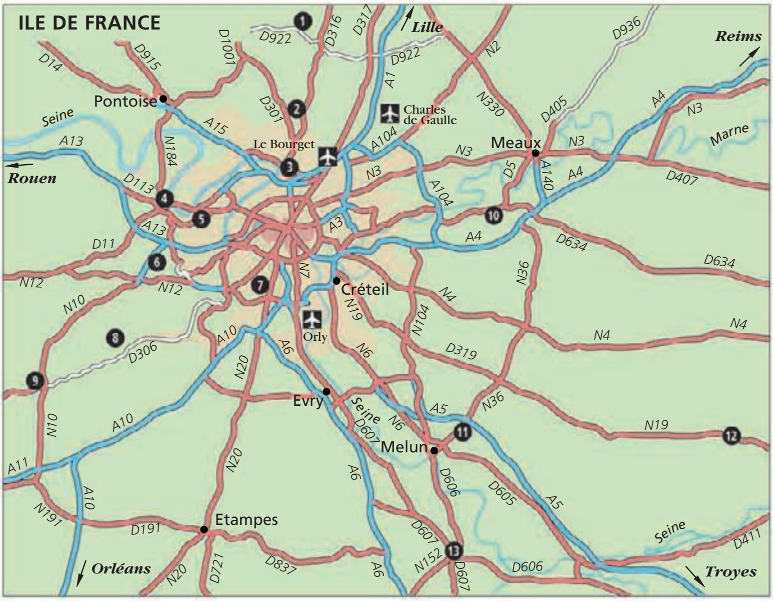
ILE DE FRANCE
Lille
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Rouen
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Troyes
Pontoise
Le Bourget
Charles de Gaulle
Meaux
Créteil
Orly
Evry
Melun
Etampes
Seine
Marne
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D5 D11 D14 D113 D191 D301 D306 D316 D317 D319 D405 D407 D411 D605 D606 D607 D634 D721 D837 D915 D922 D936 D1001

◁ **Magnificent formal gardens at the Château Vaux-le-Vicomte**

The vaulted Gothic refectory of Abbaye de Royaumont

Abbaye de Royaumont ❶

Fondation Royaumont, Asnières-sur-Oise, Val-d'Oise. ***Tel*** *01 30 35 59 70.* ○ *daily.* 🎫 ♿ ☞ *phone 01 30 35 59 00.* 🛍 ***Concerts.***
www.royaumont.com

Set among woods "near water and far from mankind," 20 miles (30 km) north of Paris, Royaumont is the finest Cistercian abbey in the Ile de France. Chosen for its remoteness, the abbey's stark stonework and simplicity of line reflect the austere teachings of St-Bernard. However, unlike his Burgundian abbeys, Royaumont was founded in 1228 by Louis IX and his mother, Blanche de Castille. "St-Louis" showered the abbey with riches and chose it as a royal burial site.

The abbey retained its royal links until the Revolution, when much of it was destroyed. It was then a textiles mill and orphanage until its revival as a cultural center. The original pillars still remain, along with a gravity-defying corner tower and the largest Cistercian cloisters in France, which enclose a charming Classical garden. The monastic quarters border one side of the cloisters.

The Château de Royaumont, erected as the abbot's palace on the eve of the Revolution, is set apart and resembles an Italianate villa. In the grounds are monks' workshops, woods, ponds, and Cistercian canals.

In summer, concerts are held in the abbey on weekends (call 01 34 68 05 50 for details).

Musée National de la Renaissance ❷

Château d'Ecouen, Val-d'Oise.
Tel *01 34 38 38 50.* ○ *Wed–Mon.* ● *Jan 1, May 1, Dec 25.*
Park ○ *Wed–Mon (closed 12:45–2pm); no animals.* 🎫 ♿ ☞ 🍴
www.musee-renaissance.fr

This imposing moated château is curiously adrift, halfway between St-Denis and Royaumont. Now a Renaissance museum, Ecouen's magnificent quadrilateral exterior provides an authentic setting for an impressive collection of paintings, tapestries, coffers, carved doors and staircases salvaged from other 16th-century châteaux.

Ecouen was built in 1538 for Anne de Montmorency, adviser to François I and Commander-in-Chief of his armies. As the second most powerful person in the kingdom, he employed Ecole de Fontainebleau artists and craftsmen to adorn his palace. Their influence is apparent in the ravishing painted fireplaces depicting biblical and Classical themes in mysterious landscapes. The most striking room is the chapel, containing a gallery and vaulted ceilings painted with the Montmorency coat of arms.

Upstairs is one of the finest series of 16th-century tapestries in France. Equally compelling are the princely apartments, the library of illuminated manuscripts, vivid ceramics from Lyon, Nevers, Venice, Faenza, and Iznik, and a display of early mathematical instruments. Recent acquisitions include 16th- and 17th-century engravings from France, Italy, and Germany.

Basilique St-Denis ❸

2 rue de Strasbourg, St-Denis, Seine-St-Denis. ***Tel*** *01 48 09 83 54.* Ⓜ *Line 13 Basilique de St-Denis* ○ *daily.* ● *Jan 1, May 1, Dec 25.* 🎫 ♿ ✝ *8:30am, 10am Sun.*

According to legend, the decapitated St-Denis struggled here, clutching his head, and an abbey was erected to commemorate the martyred bishop. Following the burial of Dagobert I in the basilica in 638, a royal link with St-Denis began, which was to span 12 centuries. Most French kings were entombed in St-Denis, and all the queens of France were crowned here. The elegant, early Gothic basilica rests on Carolingian and Romanesque crypts. Of the medieval effigies, the most impressive are of Charles V (1364) and a 12th-century likeness in enameled copper of Blanche de France with her dog. The mask-like

Statue of Louis XVI at St-Denis

The west wing of Musée National de la Renaissance

The Renaissance tomb of Louis XII and Anne de Bretagne in St-Denis

serenity of these effigies is in sharp contrast with the graphically realistic Renaissance portrayal of agony present in the grotesque mausoleum of Louis XII and Anne de Bretagne. Both are represented as naked figures, their faces eerily captured at the moment of death. Above the mausoleum, effigies of the finely dressed royal couple contemplate their own nakedness. As a reflection of humanity in the face of death, the tombs have few rivals.

St-Germain-en-Laye ❹

Yvelines. 👥 *42,200.* 🚆 🚌 ℹ *Maison Claude Debussy, 38 rue au Pain.* ***Tel** 01 39 73 02 64.* ○ *Tue–Wed, Fri–Sun.*

Dominating the Place Général de Gaulle in this chic suburb is the legendary Château de St-Germain, birthplace of Louis XIV. Louis VI built the original stronghold in 1122 but only the keep and St-Louis chapel remain. Under François I and Henri II, the medieval upper tiers were demolished, leaving a moated pentagon. Henri IV built the pavilion and terraces that run down to the Seine, and Louis XIV had Le Nôtre landscape the gardens before leaving for Versailles in 1682.

Today the château houses the **Musée des Antiquités Nationales**, which exhibits archeological finds from prehistory to the Middle Ages. Created by Napoleon III, the collection includes a 22,000-year-old carved female, a megalithic tomb, a bronze helmet from the 3rd century BC, and Celtic jewelry. The finest treasure is the Gallo-Roman mosaic pavement.

🏛 Musée des Antiquités Nationales
Château de St-Germain-en-Laye.
***Tel** 01 39 10 13 00.*
○ *Wed–Mon.* 📷 ♿ 🛍
www.musee-antiquites nationales.fr

Château de Malmaison ❺

Rueil-Malmaison, Hauts-de-Seine. ***Tel** 01 41 29 05 55.* ○ *Wed–Mon; times vary according to season; phone for details.* ● *Jan 1, Dec 25.* 📷 ♿ *restr.* **www**.chateau-malmaison.fr

Situated 9 miles (15 km) west of Paris, this 17th-century estate is now best known for its Napoleonic associations. Bought by Josephine as a retreat from the formality of the Emperor's residences at the Tuileries and Fontainebleau, it has charming rural grounds. While Josephine loved this country manor, Napoleon scorned its entrance as fit only for servants. Instead, he had a curious drawbridge built at the back of the château.

The finest rooms are the frescoed and vaulted library, the canopied campaign room, and the sunny Salon de Musique, hung with paintings from Josephine's private collection. Napoleon's restrained yellow canopied bedroom contrasts the bedchamber Josephine died in, a magnificent indulgence bedecked in red. Many of the rooms overlook the romantic "English" gardens and the famous rose garden which was cultivated by Josephine after her divorce.

Memorabilia abound, from imperial eagles to David's moody portrait of Napoleon, or Gérard's painting of the languid Josephine reclining on a chaise-longue.

Château Bois Préau, set in the wooded grounds, houses a museum dedicated to Napoleon's exile and death.

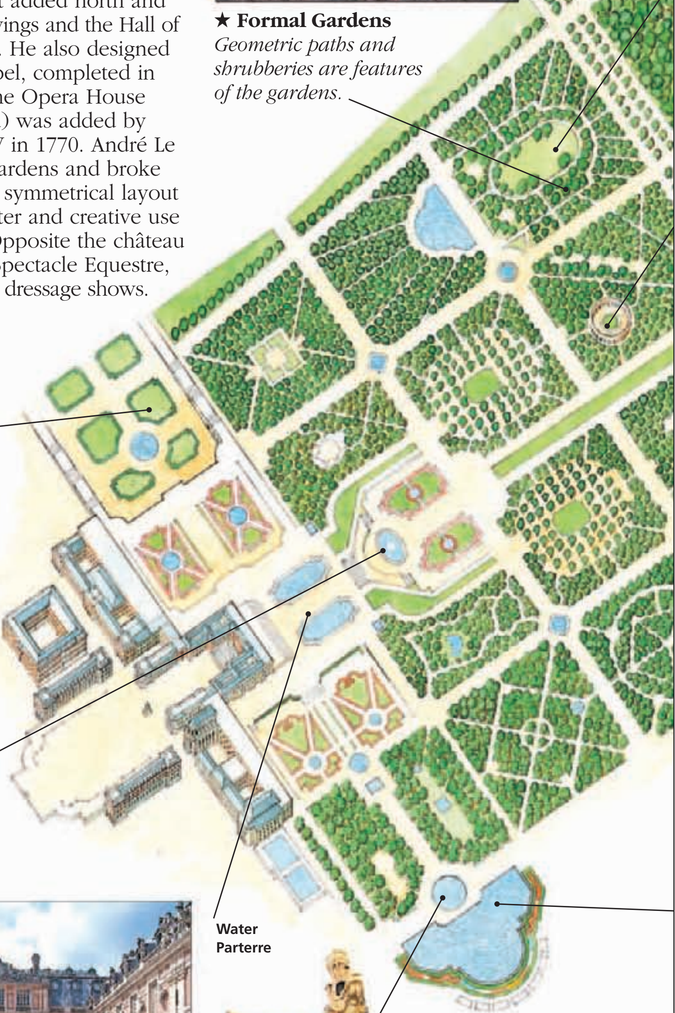
Empress Josephine's bed at Château de Malmaison

Château de Versailles ❻

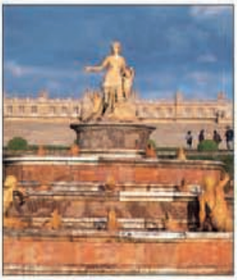
Garden statue of a flautist

The present palace, started by Louis XIV in 1668, grew around Louis XIII's original hunting lodge. Architect Louis Le Vau built the first section, which expanded into an enlarged courtyard. From 1678, Jules Hardouin-Mansart added north and south wings and the Hall of Mirrors. He also designed the chapel, completed in 1710. The Opera House (L'Opéra) was added by Louis XV in 1770. André Le Nôtre enlarged the gardens and broke the monotony of the symmetrical layout with expanses of water and creative use of uneven ground. Opposite the château is the Academie du Spectacle Equestre, where you can watch dressage shows.

★ Formal Gardens
Geometric paths and shrubberies are features of the gardens.



The Orangery was built beneath the Parterre du Midi to house exotic plants in winter.



Fountain of Latona
Four marble basins rise to Balthazar Marsy's statue of the goddess Latona.

★ Château
Under Louis XIV, Versailles became the center of political power in France.

Water Parterre

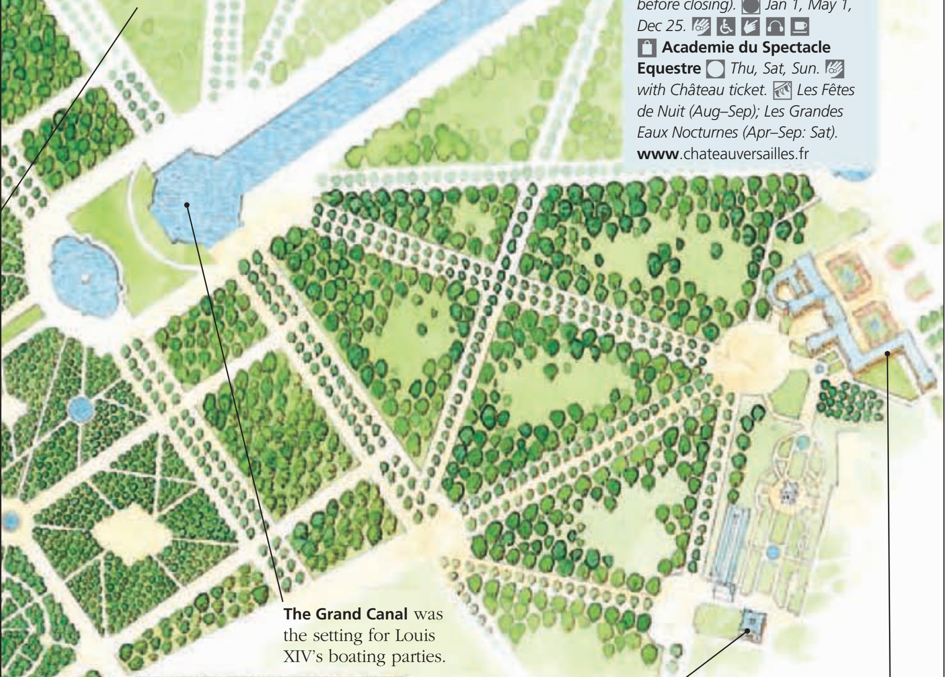
Dragon Fountain
The fountain's centerpiece is a winged monster.

The King's garden features a mirror pool in the 19th-century garden created by Louis XVIII.

Colonnade
Mansart designed this circle of marble arches in 1685.

VISITORS' CHECKLIST

Versailles, Yvelines. ***Tel*** *01 30 83 78 00.* 🚌 *171 from Paris.* RER *Versailles Rive Gauche.* 🚆 *Versailles Chantiers, Versailles Rive Droite.* **Château** ○ *9am–6:30pm (5:30pm Nov–Mar) Tue–Sun.* ● *some public hols; phone to check.* 🎟 **Grand Trianon & Petit Trianon** ○ *noon–7pm (5:30pm winter) daily (last adm: 30 mins before closing).* ● *Jan 1, May 1, Dec 25.* 🎟 ♿ ✋ 🎧 ☕ 🔒 **Academie du Spectacle Equestre** ○ *Thu, Sat, Sun.* 🎟 *with Château ticket.* 🎟 *Les Fêtes de Nuit (Aug–Sep); Les Grandes Eaux Nocturnes (Apr–Sep: Sat).*
www.chateauversailles.fr



The Grand Canal was the setting for Louis XIV's boating parties.

Fountain of Neptune
Groups of sculptures spray spectacular jets of water in Le Nôtre's 17th-century garden.

Petit Trianon
Built in 1762 as a retreat for Louis XV, this small château became a favorite with Marie-Antoinette.

★ Grand Trianon
Louis XIV built this small palace of stone and pink marble in 1687 to escape the rigors of court life and to enjoy the company of Madame de Maintenon.

STAR FEATURES

- ★ Château
- ★ Formal Gardens
- ★ Grand Trianon

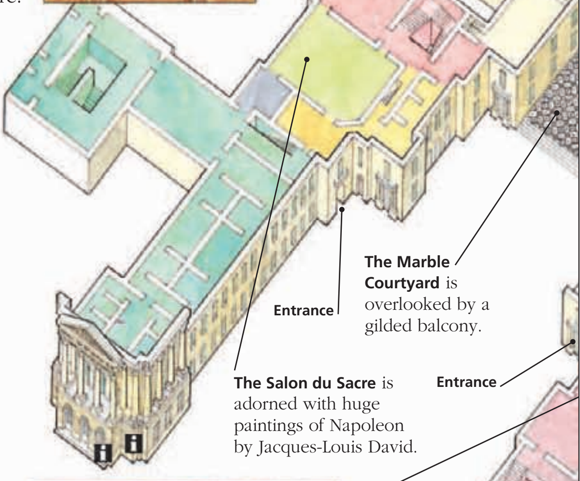
Inside the Château de Versailles

The sumptuous main apartments are on the first floor of this vast château complex. Around the Marble Courtyard are the private apartments of the king and queen. On the garden side are the state apartments where official court life took place. These were richly decorated by Charles Le Brun with marble, stone and wood carvings, murals, velvet, silver, and gilded furniture. Beginning with the Salon d'Hercule, each state room is dedicated to an Olympian deity. The climax is the Hall of Mirrors, where 17 great mirrors face tall arched windows. Not all rooms are open at the same time so check on arrival.

KEY TO FLOOR PLAN

- 🟩 South wing
- 🟩 Coronation room
- 🟨 Madame de Maintenon's apartments
- 🟥 Queen's apartments and private suite
- 🟦 State apartments
- ⬜ King's apartments and private suite
- 🟥 North wing
- 🟩 Nonexhibition space

★ Queen's Bedroom
In this room the queens of France gave birth to the royal children in public view.



The Marble Courtyard is overlooked by a gilded balcony.

Entrance

The Salon du Sacre is adorned with huge paintings of Napoleon by Jacques-Louis David.

Entrance

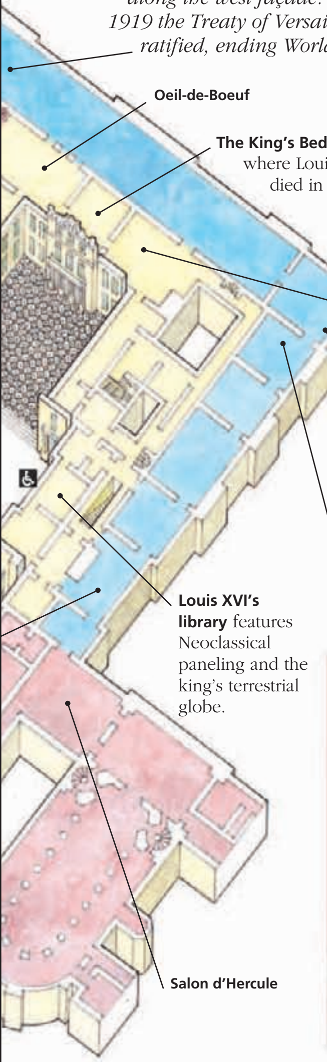
★ Salon de Vénus
A statue of Louis XIV stands amid the rich marble decor of this room.

Stairs to ground floor reception area
ℹ 🎧 🧥 ☎ ☕

★ Chapelle Royale
The chapel's first floor was reserved for the royal family and the ground floor for the court. The beautiful interior is decorated with Corinthian columns and white marble, gilding, and Baroque murals.

STAR FEATURES

- ★ Chapelle
- ★ Salon de Vénus
- ★ Hall of Mirrors
- ★ Queen's Bedroom



★ Hall of Mirrors
Great state occasions were held in this room stretching 233 ft (70 m) along the west façade. Here in 1919 the Treaty of Versailles was ratified, ending World War I.

Oeil-de-Boeuf

The King's Bedroom is where Louis XIV died in 1715.

The Cabinet du Conseil was used by the king to receive his ministers and family.

Salon de la Guerre
The room's theme of war is reinforced by Antoine Coysevox's stuccoed relief of Louis XIV riding to victory.

Louis XVI's library features Neoclassical paneling and the king's terrestrial globe.

Salon d'Apollon
Designed by Le Brun and dedicated to the god Apollo, this was Louis XIV's throne room. A copy of Hyacinthe Rigaud's famous portrait of the king (1701) hangs here.

Salon d'Hercule

TIMELINE

Louis XV

1661 Louis XIV enlarges château

1667 Grand Canal begun

1668 Construction of new château by Le Vau

1671 Interior decoration by Le Brun begun

1682 Louis XIV and Marie-Thérèse move to Versailles

1715 Death of Louis XIV. Versailles abandoned by court

1722 12-year-old Louis XV occupies Versailles

1774 Louis XVI and Marie-Antoinette live at Versailles

1789 King and Queen forced to leave Versailles for Paris

1793 Louis XVI and Marie-Antoinette executed

1833 Louis-Philippe turns the château into a museum

1919 Treaty of Versailles signed on June 28

1650 | 1700 | 1750 | 1800 | 1850

Château de Sceaux ⑦

Sceaux, Hauts-de-Seine. ***Tel*** *01 41 87 29 50.* ○ *Wed–Mon.* ● *public hols & lunchtimes.* ♿ 👉 **www**.chateau-sceaux.fr

The Parc de Sceaux, bounded by elegant villas, is an appealing mixture of formal gardens, woods, and water containing Classical gardens designed by Le Nôtre. The gardens use water to great effect, with tiered waterfalls and fountains presenting a moving staircase that cascades into an octagonal basin. This feeds into the Grand Canal and offers a poplar-lined view to the Pavillon de Hanovre. This elegant pavilion is one of several that adorn the park, which also contains Mansart's Classical Orangerie. Today this is the setting for exhibitions and, in summer, classical music concerts.

Built for Colbert in 1670, the original château was demolished and rebuilt in Louis XIII style in 1856. The stylish fake contains the Musée de l'Ile de France, which celebrates the landscapes and châteaux of the region with paintings, furniture, and sculpture.

Château de Dampierre ⑧

Dampierre-en-Yvelines, Yvelines. ***Tel*** *01 30 52 53 24.* ○ *Apr–mid-Oct: daily.* ● *Sun lunch.* ✋ ♿ *restricted.* 👉 🍴 **www**.chateau-de-dampierre.fr

After Versailles and Rambouillet, Dampierre is the most celebrated château southwest of Paris. Built in 1675 for the Duc de Chevreuse, the exterior of the château is a harmonious composition of rose-colored brick and cool stone, designed by Hardouin-Mansart.

By contrast, the interior sumptuously evokes Versailles, particularly in the royal apartments and the Louis XIV dining room. The grandest room is the frescoed Salle des Fêtes, remodeled in the 19th century in triumphal Roman style. The rooms overlook gardens landscaped by Le Nôtre.

Château de Rambouillet

Château de Rambouillet ⑨

Rambouillet, Yvelines. ***Tel*** *01 34 83 00 25.* ○ *Wed–Mon.* ● *Jan 1, May 1, Nov 1 & 11, Dec 25, when the president in residence & lunchtimes.* ✋ 👉 **http://**chateau-rambouillet.monuments-nationaux.fr

The château borders the deep Forêt de Rambouillet, once the favorite royal hunting ground. This ivy-covered red-brick château, flanked by five stone towers, is curious rather than beautiful. Adopted as a feudal castle, country estate, royal palace, and Imperial residence, it reflects a composite of French royal history. Since 1897, it has been the president's official summer residence.

Inside, oak-paneled rooms are adorned with Empire-style furnishings and Aubusson tapestries. The main façade overlooks Classical parterres. Nearby is the Queen's Dairy, given by Louis XVI to Marie-Antoinette so that she could play milkmaid.

Environs About 17 miles (28 km) north on the D11 is the **Château de Thoiry**, which has a safari park and an innovative play area for children.

Disneyland Resort Paris ⑩

Marne-la-Vallée, Seine-et-Marne. ***Tel*** *08 25 30 02 22.* ○ *daily.* RER *Marne-la-Vallée-Chessy.* 🚆 *TGV from Lille or Lyon.* 🚌 *from both airports.* ✋ ♿ **www**.disneylandparis.com

Minnie Mouse

Disneyland Resort Paris covers 500 acres (200 ha), with two theme parks, seven hotels, facilities for shopping and dining, and convention centers. Most interesting are the Parks – the first with its five themed Lands, offering magic dominated by Sleeping Beauty Castle, and Walt Disney Studios, paying homage to the movies.

Château de Vaux-le-Vicomte ⑪

Maincy, Seine-et-Marne. ***Tel*** *01 64 14 41 90.* 🚌 *shuttle from Melun train station.* ○ *mid-Mar–mid-Oct: daily.* ✋ 🍴 **www**.vaux-le-vicomte.com

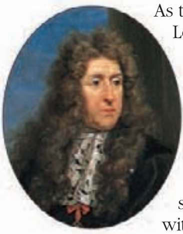
Set north of Melun, not far from Fontainebleau, the château enjoys a peaceful rural

SÈVRES PORCELAIN

In 1756 Madame de Pompadour and Louis XV opened a porcelain factory near Versailles at Sèvres to supply the royal residences with tableware and *objets d'art*. Thus began the production of exquisite dinner services, statuettes, Etruscan-style vases, romantic cameos, and porcelain paintings, depicting grand châteaux or mythological scenes. Sèvres porcelain is typified by its translucence, durability, and narrow palette of colors.

Le Pugilat **(1832), one of a pair of vases from Sèvres**

ANDRE LE NÔTRE



As the greatest French landscape gardener, Le Nôtre (1613–1700) created masterpieces in château gardens all over France. His Classical vision shaped many in the Ile de France, such as those at Dampierre, Sceaux, and Vaux-le-Vicomte. At Vaux he perfected the concept of the *jardin à la française*: avenues framed by statues and box hedges; water gardens with fountains and ornate pools; graceful terraces and geometrical parterres "embroidered" with motifs. His genius lay in architectural orchestration and a sense of symmetry, typified by the sweeping vistas of Versailles, his greatest triumph.

location. Nicolas Fouquet, a powerful court financier to Louis XIV, challenged the architect Le Vau and the decorator Le Brun to create the most sumptuous palace of the day. The result is one of the greatest 17th-century French châteaux. However, it also led to his downfall. Louis and his ministers were so enraged – because its luxury cast the royal palaces into the shade – that they arrested Fouquet.

The interior is a gilded banquet of frescoes, stucco, caryatids, and giant busts. The Salon des Muses boasts Le Brun's magnificent frescoed ceiling of dancing nymphs and poetic sphinxes. La Grande Chambre Carrée is decorated in Louis XIII style with paneled walls and an impressive triumphal frieze, evoking Rome. However, its many rooms feel intimate and the scale is not overwhelming.

Yet Vaux-le-Vicomte's continuing fame is due to André Le Nôtre's stunning gardens. The landscape designer's early training as a painter is evident in the magnificent succession of terraces, ornamental lakes, and fountains, which descend to a formal canal. On Saturday evenings from May to October, the castle is lit with over 2,000 candles and classical music is played in the gardens.

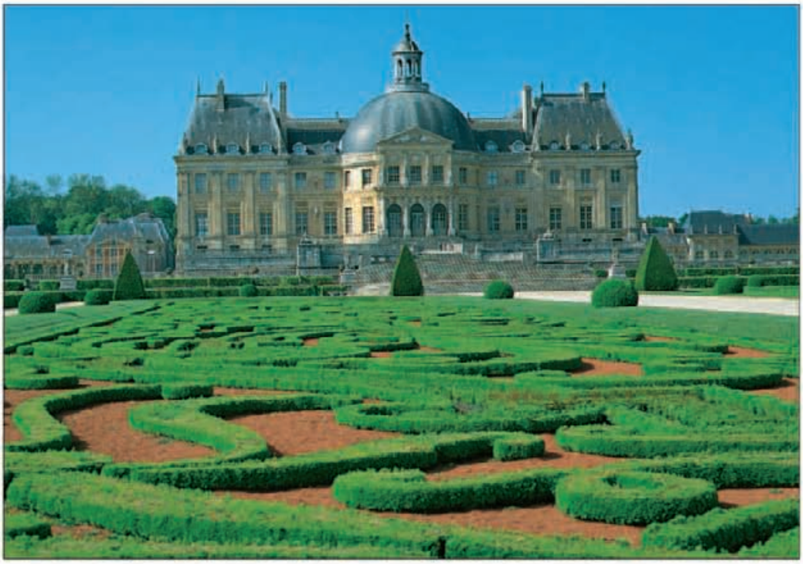
Provins ⑫

Seine-et-Marne. 👥 *12,000.* 🚆 🚌 ℹ *Chemin de Villecran (01 64 60 26 26).* 🛒 *Sat.* **www**.provins.net

As a Roman outpost, Provins commanded the border of Ile de France and Champagne. Today, it offers a coherent vision of the medieval world. Ville Haute, the upper town, is clustered within high 12th-century ramparts, complete with crenelations and defensive ditches. The ramparts to the west are the best preserved. Here, between the fortified gateways of Porte de Jouy and Porte St-Jean, the fortifications are dotted with square, round, and rectangular towers.

The town is dominated by Tour César, a keep with four corner turrets and a pyramid shaped roof. The moat and fortifications were added by the English during the Hundred Years' War. A guard-room leads to a gallery and views over the place du Chatel, a busy square of medieval gabled houses, and over the wheatfields beyond.

Provins is proud of its crimson roses. Every June, a floral celebration is held in the riverside rose garden, marked by a medieval festival with falconry and jousting.



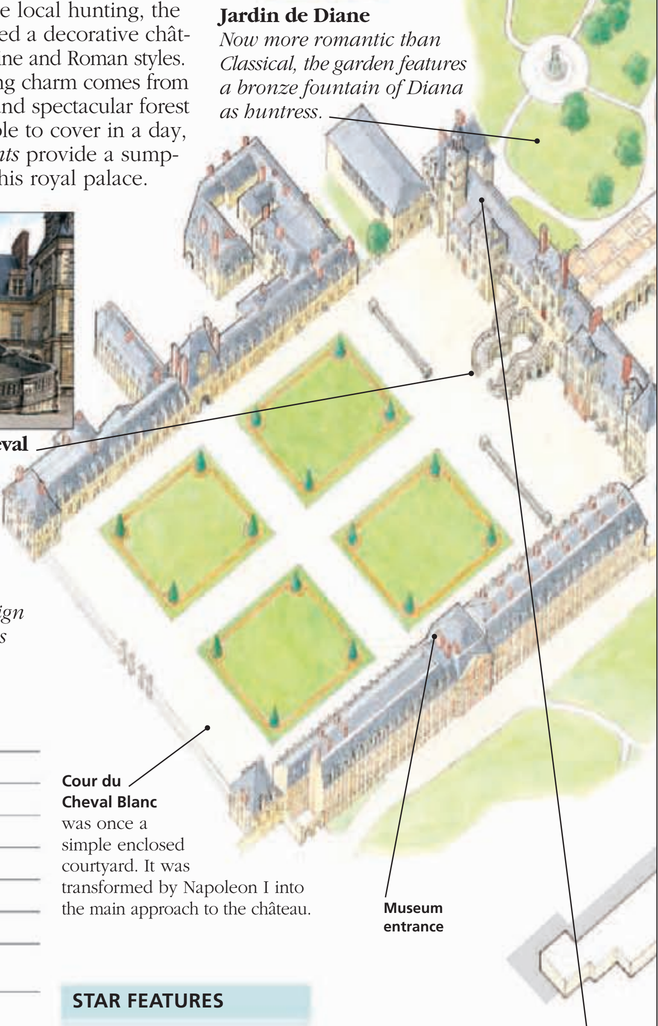
Château de Vaux-le-Vicomte seen across the gardens designed by Le Nôtre

Château de Fontainebleau ⓭

Ceiling detail from the Salle de Bal

Fontainebleau is not the product of a single vision but is a bewildering cluster of styles from different periods. Louis VII built an abbey here which was consecrated by Thomas Becket in 1169. A medieval tower survives but the present château harks back to François I. Originally drawn by the local hunting, the Renaissance king created a decorative château modeled on Florentine and Roman styles.

Fontainebleau's abiding charm comes from its relative informality and spectacular forest setting. While impossible to cover in a day, the *grands appartements* provide a sumptuous introduction to this royal palace.



Jardin de Diane
Now more romantic than Classical, the garden features a bronze fountain of Diana as huntress.

★ Escalier du Fer-à-Cheval
This imposing horseshoe-shaped staircase by Jean Androuet du Cerceau, built in 1634, lies at the end of Cour du Cheval Blanc. Its ingenious design allowed carriages to pass beneath the two arches.

Cour du Cheval Blanc was once a simple enclosed courtyard. It was transformed by Napoleon I into the main approach to the château.

Chapelle de la Sainte Trinité was designed by Henri II in 1550. The chapel acquired its vaulted and frescoed ceiling under Henri IV and was completed by Louis XIII.

KEY TO FLOOR PLAN

- 🟥 Petits Appartements
- 🟩 Galerie des Cerfs
- 🟦 Musée Chinois
- ⬜ Musée Napoléon
- 🟨 Grands Appartements
- 🟧 Salle Renaissance
- 🟩 Appartements de Madame de Maintenon
- ⬜ Grands Appartements des Souverains
- 🟧 Escalier de la Reine/ Appartements des Chasses
- 🟩 Chapelle de la Trinité
- 🟩 Appartement Intérieur de l'Empereur

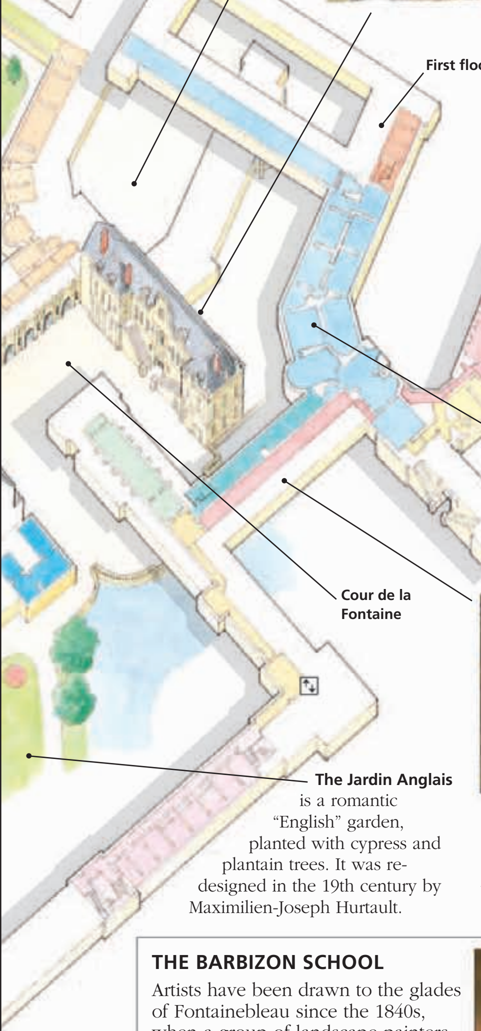
STAR FEATURES

- ★ Escalier du Fer-à-Cheval
- ★ Salle de Bal
- ★ Galerie François I

Porte Dorée
Originally a feudal gatehouse, this was transformed into the entrance pavilion to the forest by Gilles Le Breton for François I.

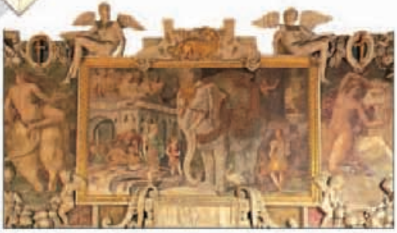
VISITORS' CHECKLIST

Seine-et-Marne. ***Tel*** *01 60 71 50 70.* ○ *9:30am–5pm (6pm Apr–Sep) Wed–Mon.* ***Gardens*** ○ *9am–5pm (6pm Mar–Apr & Oct, 7pm May–Sep).* ● *Jan 1, May 1, Dec 25.* **www.**musee-chateau-fontainebleau.fr



★ Salle de Bal
The Renaissance ballroom, designed by Primaticcio (1552), was finished under Henri II. His emblems adorn the walnut coffered ceiling, forming a pattern reflected in the parquet floor.

The Appartements de Napoléon I house his grandiose throne in the Emperor's Salle du Trône, formerly the Chambre du Roi.

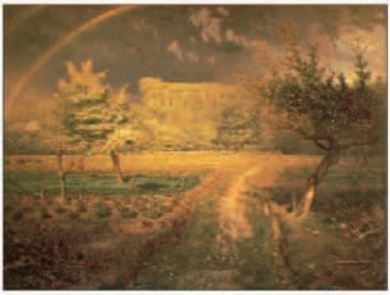


★ Galerie François I
This gilded gallery is a tribute to the Italian artists in the Ecole de Fontainebleau. *Rosso Fiorentino's allegorical frescoes pay homage to the king's wish to create "a second Rome."*

The Jardin Anglais is a romantic "English" garden, planted with cypress and plantain trees. It was redesigned in the 19th century by Maximilien-Joseph Hurtault.

THE BARBIZON SCHOOL

Artists have been drawn to the glades of Fontainebleau since the 1840s, when a group of landscape painters, determined to paint only from nature, formed around Théodore Rousseau and Millet. They settled in the nearby hamlet of Barbizon where the Auberge Ganne, a museum dedicated to the *Ecole de Barbizon*, is located.



***Spring at Barbizon*, painted by Jean-François Millet (1814–75)**

NORTHEAST FRANCE

INTRODUCING NORTHEAST FRANCE 184–191

LE NORD AND PICARDY 192–205

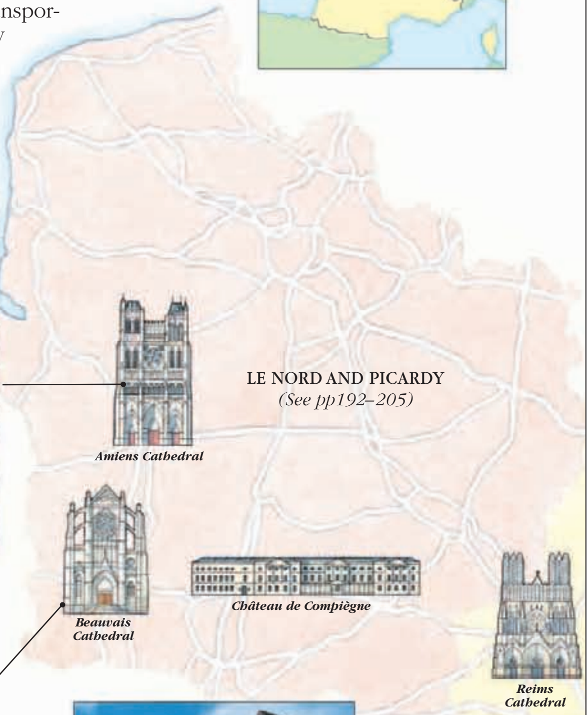
CHAMPAGNE 206–217

ALSACE AND LORRAINE 218–233

Introducing Northeast France

The rolling plains of Northern France run from the English Channel to the wooded Ardennes hills and the Vosges mountains of Alsace. Apart from somber battle memorials, the area has France's finest Gothic cathedrals – and a long tradition of brewing good quality beers. There is fine wine, too, in Champagne and Alsace. The old heavy industry has gone, while Lille's growth as a transportation hub has brought new prosperity. This map shows some of the most interesting sights.

Amiens cathedral *is renowned for its fine wood carvings and its nave, the highest in France* (see pp202–3).


LE NORD AND PICARDY
(See pp192–205)
Amiens Cathedral
Beauvais Cathedral
Château de Compiègne
Reims Cathedral

The pride of Beauvais *is its Gothic cathedral and astronomical clock* (see p200) *which escaped heavy bombing during World War II.*

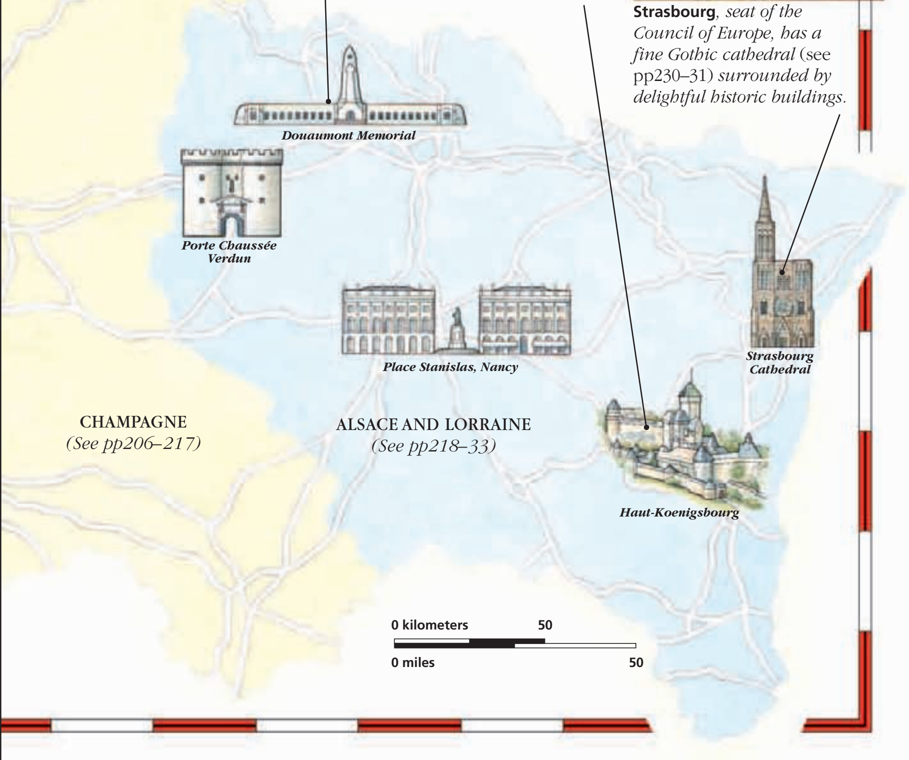
Half-timbered houses *and Renaissance mansions line the streets and alleys of Troyes' Old Town* (see p216)*, rebuilt after the great fire in 1524. Its cathedral has remarkable stained-glass windows.*

Troyes Cathedral

The legacy of World War I *is strong in this area of former battlefields. The Douaumont Memorial outside Verdun* (see pp190–91)*, with its 15,000 graves, is only one of many memorials and cemeteries here.*

Haut-Koenigsbourg, *a castle painstakingly rebuilt by Kaiser Wilhelm II when Alsace-Lorraine was under German rule, is one of Alsace's most popular attractions* (see p228).

Strasbourg, *seat of the Council of Europe, has a fine Gothic cathedral* (see pp230–31) *surrounded by delightful historic buildings.*


Douaumont Memorial
Porte Chaussée Verdun
Place Stanislas, Nancy
Strasbourg Cathedral
CHAMPAGNE (See pp206–217)
ALSACE AND LORRAINE (See pp218–33)
Haut-Koenigsbourg
0 kilometers 50
0 miles 50

The Flavors of Northeast France

The cuisine of northeast France is robust and warming, with rich beef stews, suckling pig, sausages and hams, dumplings, and sauerkraut dishes, many of them closely related to German or Flemish staples. There is good fish from the Atlantic and from freshwater lakes and rivers. Vegetables and fruit are produced in abundance, and often served in a variety of savory and sweet tarts, of which *quiche lorraine*, with bacon, eggs, and cream, is the best known. Rich cakes are popular, especially *Kougelhopf*, a ring-shaped cake of raisins and almonds soaked in kirsch, and madeleine sponge cakes.

Leeks from a local market

Golden mirabelle plums alongside the more usual variety

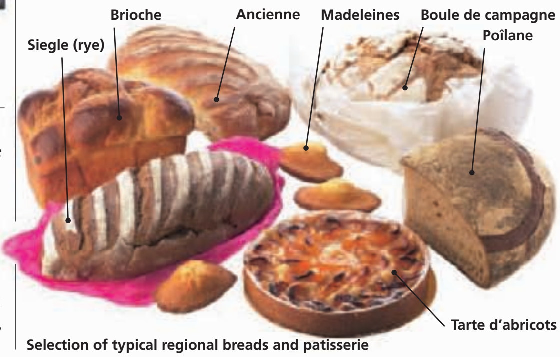
LE NORD AND PICARDY

The northern coast offers a wide variety of fish dishes, the most popular being steamed mussels served with chips (fries). Herrings are pickled, soused, grilled, or smoked and North Sea shrimps fried and eaten whole. Chicken may be cooked in beer, duck is made into pies and terrines, and eel served smoked as a starter. The market gardens *(hortillons)* of Picardy are famous for their vegetables, often made into delicious soups. Leeks or chicory, braised or in gratins, accompany many dishes. Strong, washed-rind cheeses, such as Maroilles, are typical of the region.

Beer is often drunk with meals in the northeast, where traditional methods and small breweries thrive.

CHAMPAGNE

Champagne encompasses arable plains and wooded uplands as well as vineyards, and produces game, *charcuterie*, and delicious freshwater fish. Nothing, however, can compete with its main claim to fame, Champagne itself, which is often used as a luxury cooking ingredient as well as, of course, being enjoyed in its own right.



Selection of typical regional breads and patisserie

REGIONAL DISHES AND SPECIALTIES

Beetroot

The classic dish of the region is *choucroute garni*, a platter of pickled cabbage flavored with juniper berries and cooked with white wine, ham hock, and smoked pork belly. Smoked Montbeliard and Strasbourg sausages are added toward the end of cooking. Sausages come in many variations, from *saucisses de Strasbourg* to *bratwurst*, made from veal and pork, *lewerzurscht* (liver sausage), *andouillettes* (spicy chitterling sausages), *boudin noir* (black pudding of pork and pig's blood), and *boudin blanc* (white meat without blood). There are are also smoked hams, cooked hams and many different terrines, such as *presskopf* (pig's brawn in jelly) and the jellied white meat terrine, *potjevleesch*. *Langue lucullus* is smoked ox tongue studded with *foie gras*, a specialty of Valenciennes.

Ficelle picardie *Pancakes are filled with mushrooms and ham in creme fraîche sauce, and baked with grated cheese.*

Display of traditional northern French charcuterie

Wild boar, deer, rabbit, hare, quail, partridge, and woodcock are all found in the Ardennes, made into game pâtés and terrines as well as roasts and stews. The Ardennes is also noted for its fine quality smoked ham, while *jambon de Reims* is cooked ham with mustard, champagne, and Reims vinegar. Troyes is famous for its *andouillettes*, usually served with onions or baked in a creamy mustard sauce. Fish come from the small lakes east of Troyes and trout are abundant in the clear streams of the Ardennes. The two best cheeses of Champagne are Chaource and Langres.

ALSACE AND LORRAINE

Rolling pastures, orchards, pine forests, and rivers produce the ingredients of Alsatian cooking. Meat is important, particularly pork, roasted or made into hams and sausages. In winter, game stews abound. There is a strong tradition of raising geese; after all, *foie gras* production originated in Strasbourg. The rivers are a good source of pike, trout, crayfish, and carp, often cooked in beer and served on festive occasions. Locally grown vegetables include cabbage, potatoes, and turnips, and fruit includes bilberries, quince, redcurrants, and the golden mirabelle plums of Lorraine, the latter prized for both jam and *eau de vie* (fruit brandy). The best-known cheese is Munster, a soft cow's milk cheese.

The white wines of Alsace range from steely, bone-dry Riesling (the region's finest variety) to aromatic Muscat and Gerwurztraminer. For more on the wines of Alsace, see pp232–3.

Shopping at the fish market in the port of Boulogne

ON THE MENU

Anguille au vert Eel baked with green herbs and potatoes.

Cassolette de petits gris Snails in champagne sauce.

Flamiche aux poireaux Leek tart.

Flammekueche Pizza-style tart topped with bacon, creme fraîche, and onions.

Marcassin à l'Ardennaise Wild boar with celeriac.

Potée champenoise Pork, ham, sausage, beans, and vegetable stew.

Potée Lorraine Casserole of salt pork with vegetables.

Zewelwai A rich onion tart.

Truite à l'Ardennaise *Trout is stuffed with breadcrumbs and finely chopped Ardennes ham, then baked.*

Carbonnade de boeuf *Steak and caramelized onions are covered with beer and cooked for three hours.*

Babas au rhum *These are dry yeast cakes of raisins, eggs, and butter, doused in rum and served with cream.*

France's Wine Regions: Champagne

Giant carved barrel, Épernay

Since its fabled "invention" by the monk Dom Pérignon in the 17th century, no other wine has rivaled champagne as the symbol of luxury and celebration. Only wines made in this region by the *Méthode Champenoise* can be called champagne *(see p210)*. Most champagne is non-vintage: the skill of the blenders, using reserves of older wines, creates consistency and excellence year on year. The "big names" *(grandes marques)* command the prestige and prices, but many small growers and cooperatives also produce excellent-value wines well worth seeking out.

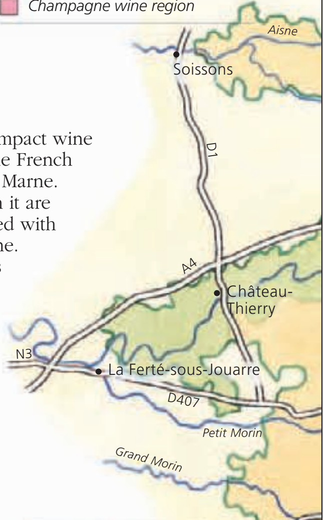
LOCATOR MAP

🟪 *Champagne wine region*

Grapes going for pressing, Montagne de Reims

WINE REGIONS

Champagne is a compact wine region, largely in the French *département* of the Marne. Certain areas within it are particularly identified with certain styles of wine. The Aube produces 25 per cent of all champagne as well the exclusive Rosé des Riceys.



BOLLINGER
Special Cuvée
BRUT
Champagne
Aÿ France

From a name *famous even to non-wine lovers, this is in the classic* brut *(dry) style; only* brut non dosage *or* brut sauvage *is drier.*

Nogent-sur-Seine

KEY

- 🟩 Champagne *appellation* area
- 🟩 Vallée de la Marne district
- 🟧 Montagne de Reims district
- 🟪 Côte de Sézanne district
- 🟨 Côte des Blancs district
- 🟥 Aube district

0 kilometers 15

0 miles 15

KEY FACTS ABOUT CHAMPAGNE

Location and Climate
The cool, marginal climate creates the finesse that other sparkling wines strive for, but seldom achieve. Chalky soils and east- and north-facing aspects help produce the relatively high acidity champagne needs.

Grape Varieties
Three varieties are grown: red ***Pinot Noir*** and ***Pinot Meunier***, and white ***Chardonnay***. Most champagne is a blend of all three, though Blanc de Blancs is 100 percent Chardonnay and Blanc de Noirs, although white, is made only from red grapes.

Good Producers
Grandes Marques: Bollinger, Gosset, Krug, Möet et Chandon, Joseph Perrier, Louis Roederer, Pol Roger, Billecart-Salmon, Veuve Clicquot, Taittinger, Ruinart, Laurent Perrier, Salon.
Négociants, cooperatives & growers: Boizel, M. Arnould, Cattier, Bricout, Drappier, Ployez-Jacquemart, H. Blin, Gimmonet, Andre Jacquart, Chartogne-Taillet, Vilmart, Alfred Gratien, Emile Hamm, B. Paillard, P. Gerbais.

Good Vintages
2005, 2003, 2000, 1998, 1996, 1990.

Champagne Charlie
Charles Heidsieck

Champagne Charlie *was immortalized in a British music-hall song as a high-living, devil-may-care figure.*

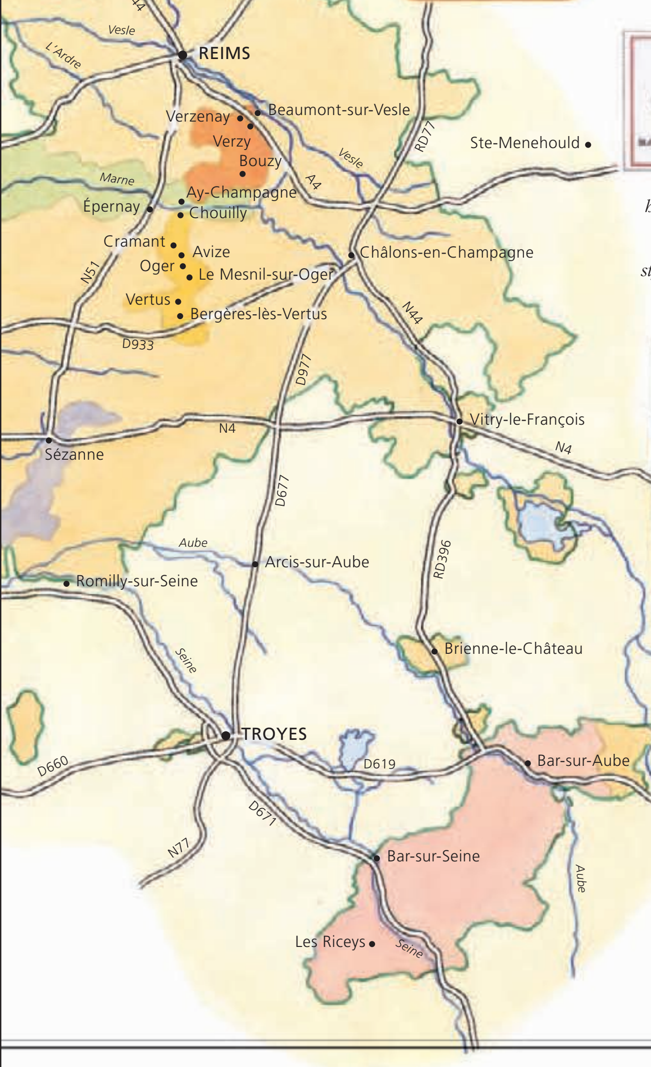
Meticulously laid out vineyards of a maison de champagne

BRUT ROSÉ
Billecart-Salmon
Champagne

Pink champagne, *often with hints of soft fruit flavors, makes perfect summer drinking; it normally gains its color from the blending of red and white wines.*

CHAMPAGNE DEUTZ

From the respected *house of Deutz, this vintage Blanc de Blancs is champagne in a lighter style, made entirely from Chardonnay grapes.*


N51
D944
Vesle
L'Ardre
REIMS
Beaumont-sur-Vesle
Verzenay
Verzy
Bouzy
RD77
Ste-Menehould
Vesle
A4
Marne
Épernay
Ay-Champagne
Chouilly
Cramant
Avize
Oger
Le Mesnil-sur-Oger
Châlons-en-Champagne
N51
Vertus
Bergères-lès-Vertus
N44
D933
D977
N4
Vitry-le-François
N4
Sézanne
D677
RD396
Aube
Arcis-sur-Aube
Romilly-sur-Seine
Seine
Brienne-le-Château
TROYES
D619
Bar-sur-Aube
D660
D671
N77
Bar-sur-Seine
Aube
Les Riceys
Seine

Champagne blender

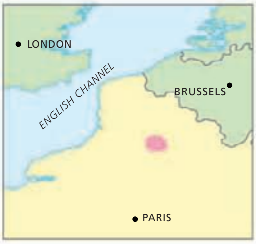
CHAMPAGNE
Canard-Duchêne
DEMI-SEC

For those who *prefer a less dry champagne, a demi-sec, like this wine from Canard-Duchêne, makes the ideal choice.*

The Battle of the Somme

British World War I soldier

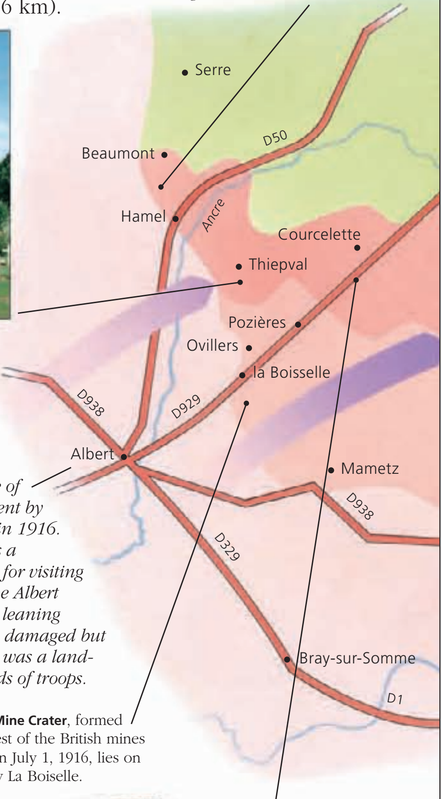
The many cemeteries that cover the Somme region serve as a poignant reminder of the mass slaughter that took place on the Western Front in World War I (which ended with the Armistice on November 11, 1918). Between July 1 and November 21, 1916 the Allied forces lost more than 600,000 men and the Germans at least 465,000. The Battle of the Somme, a series of campaigns conducted by British and French armies against fortified positions held by the Germans, relieved the hard-pressed French at Verdun, but hopes of a breakthrough never materialized, and the Allies only managed to advance 10 miles (16 km).



LOCATOR MAP

■ Somme battlefield

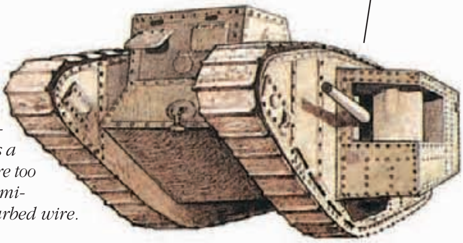
Thiepval Memorial *was designed by Sir Edwin Lutyens. It dominates the landscape of Thiepval, one of the most hard-fought areas of the battle, appropriately chosen as a memorial to the 73,367 British soldiers with no known grave.*



Beaumont Hamel Memorial Park, a tribute to the Royal Newfoundland Regiment, has a huge bronze caribou.

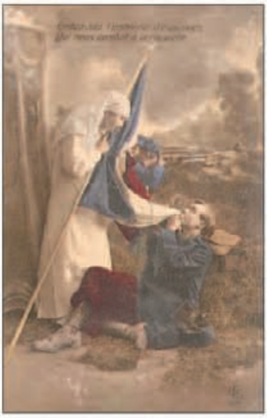
Albert *was the site of heavy bombardment by German artillery in 1916. Today, the town is a convenient center for visiting the battlefields. The Albert Basilique, with its leaning Virgin statue, was damaged but is now restored. It was a landmark for thousands of troops.*

Lochnager Mine Crater, formed by the largest of the British mines exploded on July 1, 1916, lies on the ridge by La Boiselle.



The British Tank Memorial, *on the main road from Albert to Bapaume, commemorates the first use of tanks in warfare on September 15, 1916. The attack was a limited success; the tanks of World War I were too few before 1918 to transform warfare dominated by artillery, machine guns, and barbed wire.*

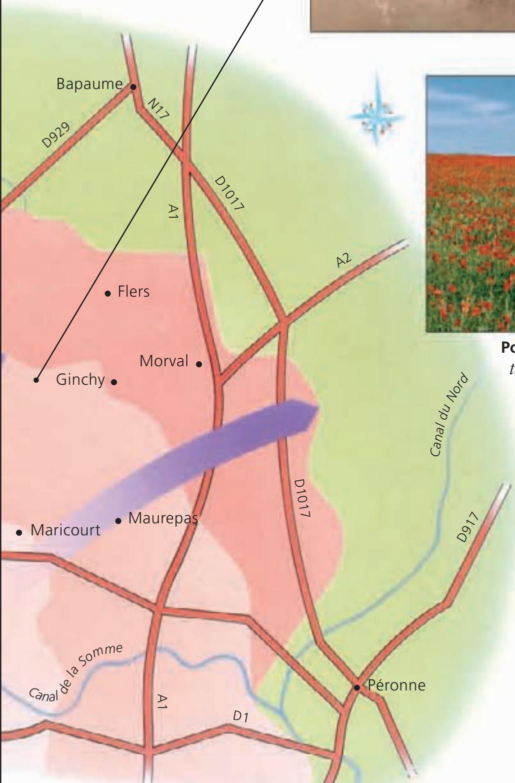
Propaganda in World War I *was employed by both sides to maintain support at home. This French postcard has a popular image for civilian consumption. It shows a dying soldier kissing the flag, under the tender gaze of a ministering nurse, affirming his faith in the cause with his last breath.*



VISITORS' CHECKLIST

D929, D938 from Albert. ℹ *30 pl de la République, 80800 Corbie.* ***Tel*** *03 22 96 95 76.* **www**.tourisme-albert.net. **Albert Basilique, Beaumont Hamel Memorial Park, Delville Wood, La Boiselle, Thiepval, & Pozières memorials** ○ *daily.* **Ulster Tower** ○ *Feb–Mar: Tue–Sun; Apr–Nov: daily.* **South African Memorial,** Delville Wood, Longueval. ***Tel*** *03 22 85 02 17.* ○ *Feb–Nov: Tue–Sun.* ● *hols.* **Historial de Péronne** ***Tel*** *03 22 83 14 18.* ○ *May–Sep: daily; Oct– Apr: Tue–Sun.* ● *mid-Dec–mid-Jan.* 🎧 ♿ ☞ ☕ 🛍 **www**.historial.org

Delville Wood South African Memorial and Museum show the importance of Commonwealth forces in the Somme.



Poppies *were one of the few plants to grow on the battlefield. Ghengis Khan brought the first white poppy from China and, according to legend, it turned red after battle. Today poppies are a symbol of remembrance.*

KEY

- 🟪 Allied forces
- 🟩 German forces
- 🟫 Front Line before July 1, 1916
- 🟧 Front Line progress July–September 1916
- 🟥 Front Line progress September–November 1916

0 kilometers 5

0 miles 5

The Front Line trenches *stretched from the North Sea to the Swiss frontier; only by keeping underground could men survive the terrible conditions. Trenches remain in a few areas, including the Beaumont Hamel Park.*

LE NORD AND PICARDY

PAS DE CALAIS · NORD · SOMME · OISE · AISNE

Beneath the modern skin of France's northernmost region, the sights and monuments bear witness to the triumphs and turbulence of its past: soaring Gothic cathedrals, stately châteaux along the river Oise, and the battlefields and memorials of World War I.

The Channel ports of Dunkerque, Calais, and Boulogne, and the refined resort of Le Touquet, are the focal points along a busy coastline that stretches from the Somme estuary to the Belgian frontier. Boulogne has a genuine maritime flavor, and the white cliffs running from here to Calais provide the most dramatic scenery along the Côte d'Opale.

Flemish culture holds sway along the border with Belgium: an unfamiliar France of windmills and canals where the local taste is for beer, stews, and festivals with gallivanting giants. Lille is the dominant city here, a sprawling modern metropolis with a lively historic heart and an excellent art museum. To the southwest, the grace of Flemish architecture is handsomely displayed in the central squares of Arras, the capital of Artois.

From here to the Somme valley the legacy of World War I, with its memorial cemeteries and poppy-strewn battlefields, makes compelling viewing.

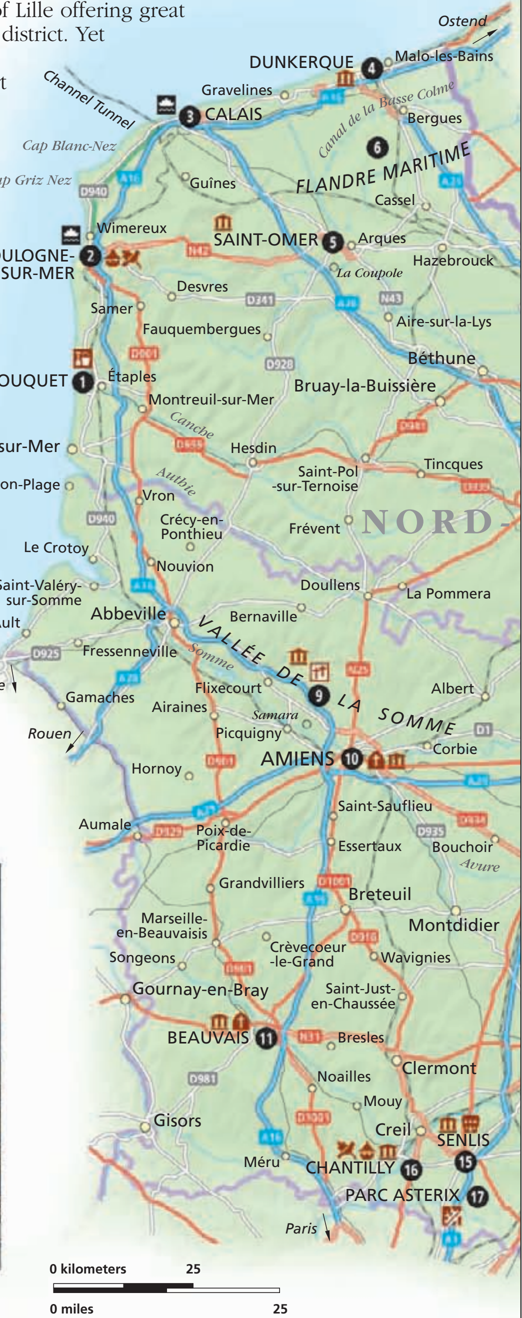
Cathedrals are the main appeal of Picardy. In Amiens, its capital, Cathédrale Notre-Dame is a pinnacle of the Gothic style – its magnificence echoed by the dizzying achievements at Beauvais further south. Splendid cathedrals at Noyon, Senlis, and the delightful hilltop town of Laon chart the evolution of the Gothic. Closer to Paris, two châteaux command attention. Chantilly, the epicenter of French equestrianism, boasts gardens by Le Nôtre and a 19th-century château housing copious art treasures. Compiègne, bordered by a large and inviting forest, plays host to a lavish royal palace favored by French rulers from Louis XV to Napoleon III.

Memorial cemetery in Vallée de la Somme, an area still haunted by the memory of World War I

◁ **Catamarans on the busy beach of Le Touquet Paris-Plage**

Exploring Le Nord and Picardy

As the gateway to England and Belgium, this northern corner of France is buzzing with business and industry, with the large, Euro-oriented city of Lille offering great culture as well as a new high-tech district. Yet peace and quiet is never far away. The coast between the historic port of Boulogne-sur-Mer and the Vallée de la Somme has a rich birdlife and is perfect for a relaxing seaside visit. Inland, the many Gothic cathedrals such as Amiens and Beauvais make an impressive tour, and the World War I battlefields and memorials provide an important insight into 20th-century history. Farther south, the grand châteaux at Compiègne and Chantilly – which has the fascinating Musée Condé – are easily visited en route to or from Paris.


Ostend
DUNKERQUE 4
Malo-les-Bains
Gravelines
Channel Tunnel
3 CALAIS
Canal de la Basse Colme
Bergues
Cap Blanc-Nez
6
FLANDRE MARITIME
Cap Griz Nez
Guînes
Cassel
Wimereux
SAINT-OMER 5
Arques
BOULOGNE-SUR-MER 2
La Coupole
Hazebrouck
Desvres
Samer
Aire-sur-la-Lys
Fauquembergues
Béthune
LE TOUQUET 1
Étaples
Bruay-la-Buissière
Montreuil-sur-Mer
Canche
Berck-sur-Mer
Hesdin
Fort-Mahon-Plage
Saint-Pol-sur-Ternoise
Tincques
Authie
Vron
Crécy-en-Ponthieu
Frévent
NORD-
Le Crotoy
Nouvion
Doullens
La Pommera
Saint-Valéry-sur-Somme
Abbeville
Bernaville
Ault
Fressenneville
VALLÉE DE LA SOMME
Somme
Dieppe
Gamaches
Flixecourt
9
Albert
Airaines
Samara
Rouen
Picquigny
Corbie
AMIENS 10
Hornoy
Saint-Sauflieu
Aumale
Poix-de-Picardie
Essertaux
Bouchoir
Avure
Grandvilliers
Breteuil
Marseille-en-Beauvaisis
Montdidier
Crèvecoeur-le-Grand
Songeons
Wavignies
Gournay-en-Bray
Saint-Just-en-Chaussée
BEAUVAIS 11
Bresles
Noailles
Clermont
Mouy
Gisors
Creil
SENLIS 15
Méru
CHANTILLY 16
PARC ASTERIX 17
Paris
A16
A26
A25
A28
A29
A1
N42
N43
D940
D901
D928
D939
D941
D925
D1001
D916
D981
D929
D934
D935
D341
D929
D1
0 kilometers 25
0 miles 25

KEY

- Highway
- Major road
- Secondary road
- Minor road
- Scenic route
- Main railroad
- Minor railroad
- International border
- Regional border

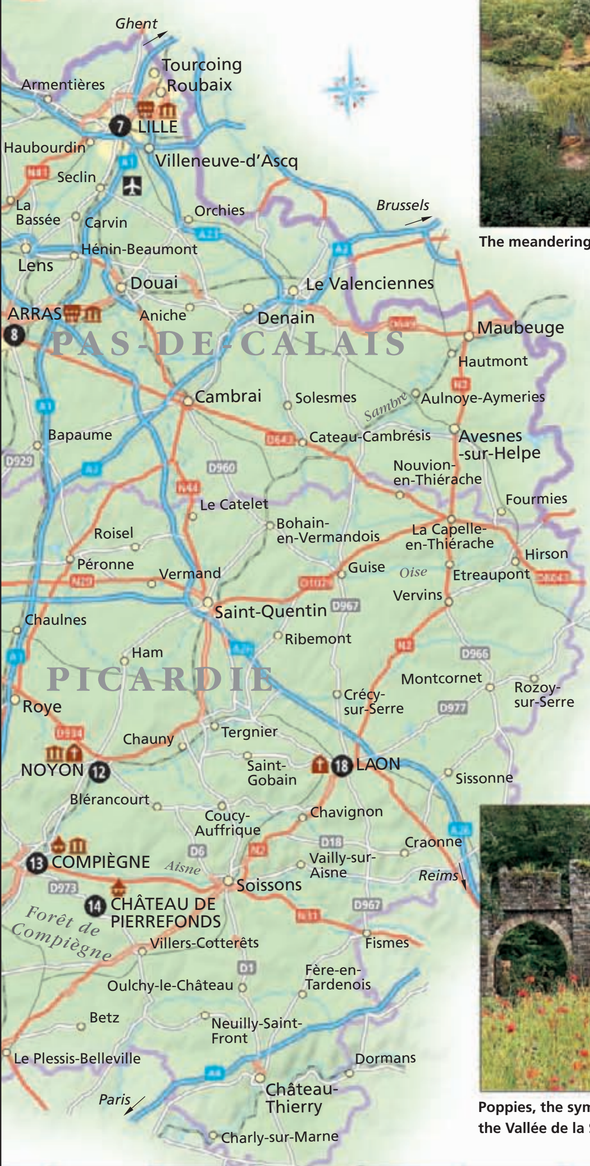
STELLA ARTOIS

Lively outdoor café in the historic Grand’ place in the heart of Arras

For additional map symbols *see back flap*

SIGHTS AT A GLANCE

Amiens ⑩
Arras ⑧
Beauvais ⑪
Boulogne-sur-Mer ②
Calais ③
Chantilly ⑯
Château de Pierrefonds ⑭
Compiègne ⑬
Dunkerque ④
Flandre Maritime ⑥
Laon ⑱
Le Touquet ①
Lille ⑦
Noyon ⑫
Parc Astérix ⑰
St-Omer ⑤
Senlis ⑮
Vallée de la Somme ⑨


Ghent
Tourcoing
Roubaix
Armentières
⑦ LILLE
Haubourdin
Villeneuve-d'Ascq
Seclin
La Bassée
Carvin
Orchies
Brussels
Hénin-Beaumont
Lens
Douai
Le Valenciennes
ARRAS ⑧
Aniche
Denain
Maubeuge
PAS-DE-CALAIS
Hautmont
Cambrai
Solesmes
Sambre
Aulnoye-Aymeries
Bapaume
Cateau-Cambrésis
Avesnes-sur-Helpe
Nouvion-en-Thiérache
Fourmies
Le Catelet
Bohain-en-Vermandois
La Capelle-en-Thiérache
Roisel
Hirson
Péronne
Vermand
Guise
Oise
Etreaupont
Vervins
Chaulnes
Saint-Quentin
Ribemont
Ham
Montcornet
PICARDIE
Crécy-sur-Serre
Rozoy-sur-Serre
Roye
Tergnier
Chauny
NOYON ⑫
Saint-Gobain
⑱ LAON
Sissonne
Blérancourt
Coucy-Auffrique
Chavignon
Craonne
⑬ COMPIÈGNE
Aisne
Vailly-sur-Aisne
Reims
Soissons
⑭ CHÂTEAU DE PIERREFONDS
Forêt de Compiègne
Villers-Cotterêts
Fismes
Oulchy-le-Château
Fère-en-Tardenois
Betz
Neuilly-Saint-Front
Le Plessis-Belleville
Dormans
Paris
Château-Thierry
Charly-sur-Marne
A1
A2
A21
A23
A26
A4
N2
N31
N44
N29
D1
D6
D18
D929
D960
D967
D966
D977
D973
D934
D643
D1029
D1043

The meandering waters in the Vallée de la Somme

GETTING AROUND

The main entry point into the region is Calais (and the Channel Tunnel terminal 2 miles/3 km south). From here, autoroutes A16 and A26/A1, several major N and D roads, and mainline rail services run directly to Paris. In addition, TGVs serve Calais-Frethun, Lille, and Paris. There is a dense road network throughout the region. With their many local bus and train connections, Lille and Amiens make good bases. The A26 (or *Autoroute des Anglais*) crosses the whole region from Calais to Troyes, via Arras and Laon, giving easy access to eastern Picardy. It's also a useful route if you're heading south and want to avoid Paris.

Poppies, the symbol of World War I battlefields, in the Vallée de la Somme

Le Touquet beach at low tide

Le Touquet ❶

Pas de Calais. 👥 *6,500.* 🚉 🚌
ℹ *Palais de l'Europe (03 21 06 72 00).*
⛺ *Thu & Sat (Jun–mid-Sep: also Mon).*
www.letouquet.com

Properly known as Le Touquet Paris-Plage, this resort was created in the 19th century and became fashionable with the rich and famous between the two World Wars.

A vast pine forest, planted in 1855, spreads around the town sheltering stately villas. To the west, a grid of chic hotels, vacation residences, and sophisticated stores and restaurants borders a long, sandy beach. A racecourse and casino are complemented by seaside amusements and sports facilities, including two excellent golf courses, horse-riding, and land yachting.

Farther inland, the hilltop town of **Montreuil** has lime-washed 17th-century houses, abundant restaurants, and a tree-shaded rampart walk.

Boulogne-sur-Mer ❷

Pas de Calais. 👥 *45,000.* 🚉 🚌
ℹ *Parvis de Nausicaa (03 21 10 88 10).* ⛺ *Wed & Sat (pl Dalton), Sun (pl Vignon).* **www**.tourisme-boulognesurmer.com

An important fishing port and busy marina, Boulogne rewards its visitors well. Its attractions come neatly boxed in a walled Haute Ville, with the Porte des Dunes opening onto a 17th–19th-century ensemble of Palais de Justice, Bibliothèque, and Hôtel de Ville in **place de la Résistance**.

The 19th-century **Basilique Notre-Dame** is capped by a dome visible for miles. Inside, a bejeweled wooden statue represents Boulogne's patroness, Notre-Dame de Boulogne. She is wearing a *soleil*, a head-dress also worn by women during the *Grande Procession* held annually in her honor. Nearby, the powerful moated 13th-century **Château**, built for the Counts of Boulogne, is now a well-organized historical museum.

In the center of town, stores, hotels, and fish restaurants line the quai Gambetta on the east bank of the river Liane. To the north lie Boulogne's beach and **Nausicaa**, a vast, spectacular and innovative aquarium and Sea Center.

North of the town, the **Colonne de la Grande Armée** was erected in 1841 as a monument to Napoleon I's planned invasion of England in 1803–5. From the top there is a panoramic view along the coast toward Calais. This is the most scenic stretch of the Côte d'Opale (Opal Coast), with the windblown headlands of **Cap Gris-Nez** and **Cap Blanc-Nez** offering breathtakingly extensive views across the Channel.

Château
Rue de Bernet. ***Tel*** *03 21 10 02 20.*
○ *Tue–Sun.* ● *Jan 1, May 1, Dec 25.* 💶

Nausicaa
Bd Sainte-Beuve. ***Tel*** *03 21 30 99 99.*
○ *daily.* ● *3 weeks in Jan, Dec 25.*
💶 ♿ **www**.nausicaa.fr

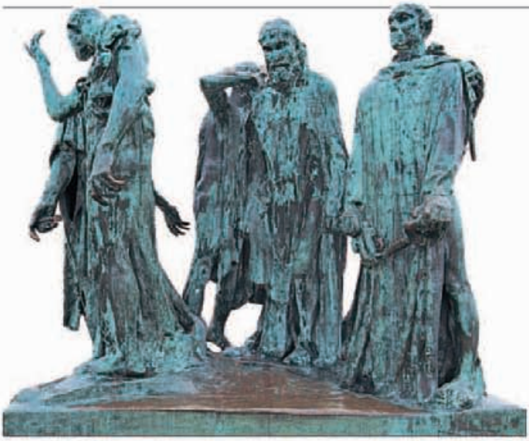
Calais ❸

Pas de Calais. 👥 *80,000.* 🚉 🚌
⛴ ℹ *12 bd Clémenceau (03 21 96 62 40).* ⛺ *Wed, Thu, & Sat.*
www.calais-cotedopale.com

Calais is a busy cross-Channel port with a sandy beach to the west. Clumsily rebuilt after World War II, it seems to have little to offer at first sight. Many visitors never get closer than the huge Cité Europe shopping mall by the Eurotunnel exit.

The **Musée des Beaux Arts**, however, has works by the Dutch and Flemish Schools. Also on show are studies for Auguste Rodin's famous statue *The Burghers of Calais* (1895).

The windswept Cap Blanc-Nez on the Côte d'Opale



***The Burghers of Calais* by Auguste Rodin (1895)**

The statue stands outside the Hôtel de Ville and celebrates an event during Edward III's siege of Calais in 1347, when six burghers offered their lives to save the rest of the town.

The **Cité de la Dentelle et de la Mode** opened in 2009, recalling the town's lace-making industry.

Musée de la Guerre, housed in a battle-scarred German blockhouse, offers a detailed account of local events during World War II.

🏛 Musée des Beaux Arts
25 rue Richelieu. ***Tel*** *03 21 46 48 40.* ○ *Wed–Mon (Sun pm).* ▨ ♿

🏛 Cité de la Dentelle
Quai du Commerce. ***Tel*** *03 21 46 43 14.* ○ *opens in 2009.*

🏛 Musée de la Guerre
Parc Saint Pierre. ***Tel*** *03 21 34 21 57.* ○ *call for opening times.* ▨

Dunkerque ❹

Nord. 👥 *200,000.* 🚆 🚌 ⛴ ℹ *Rue Amiral Ronarc'h (03 28 66 79 21).* ⊖ *Wed, Sat.* **www**.ot-dunkerque.fr

Though a major industrial port, Dunkerque has much Flemish character. Start a tour from place du Minck, with its fresh fish stalls. Nearby **Musée Portuaire** celebrates the town's maritime history. In the old center, a statue commemorates local hero Jean Bart, a 17th-century corsair, who lies in **Eglise St-Eloi**. Its belfry (1440) offers fine views.

La Mémorial du Souvenir has an exhibition of the dramatic evacuation of 350,000 British and French troops in 1940. The **Lieu d'Art et d'Action Contemporaine (LLAC)** features ceramics and glassware.

🏛 Musée Portuaire
9 quai de la Citadelle. ***Tel*** *03 28 63 33 39.* ○ *Wed–Mon.* ● *Jan 1, May 1, Dec 25.* ▨ ♿

The port at Dunkerque

🏛 La Mémorial du Souvenir
Pl du Général de Gaulle.
Tel *03 28 59 21 65.* ○ *Wed–Mon.* ● *Jan 1, Nov 1, Dec 25.* ▨ ☞ ♿ *ground floor only.*

🏛 Lieu d'Art et d'Action Contemporaine
Av des Bains. ***Tel*** *03 28 29 56 00.* ○ *Wed–Mon.* ● *public hols.* ▨ ♿

St-Omer ❺

Pas de Calais. 👥 *15,000.* 🚆 🚌 ℹ *4 rue Lion d'Or (03 21 98 08 51).* ⊖ *Sat.* **www**.tourisme-saintomer.com

Refined St-Omer seems untouched. Pilasters adorn the 17th- and 18th-century houses lining the cobbled streets, one of which, **Hôtel Sandelin**, is now a museum of fine and decorative arts. The cathedral has original 13th-century tiles and a huge organ. The **Bibliothèque Municipale** contains rare manuscripts from the Abbaye St-Bertin, a ruined 15th-century abbey east of town.

Three miles (5 km) from St-Omer, **La Coupole** is an informative WW2 museum inside a converted bunker.

🏛 Hôtel Sandelin
14 rue Carnot. ***Tel*** *03 21 38 00 94.* ○ *Wed–Sun.* ▨ ♿ *ground floor.*

🏛 Bibliothèque Municipale
40 rue Gambetta. ***Tel*** *03 21 38 35 08.* ○ *Tue–Sat.* ● *public hols.*

🏛 La Coupole
Tel *03 21 93 07 07.* ○ *daily.* ● *last week Dec–1st week Jan.*

CHANNEL CROSSINGS

Calais is only 22 miles (36 km) southeast of the English coast, and crossing the waters of the Channel – which the French know as La Manche (the Sleeve) – has inspired many intrepid exploits. The first crossing by balloon was in 1785 by Jean Pierre Blanchard; Captain M. Webb made the first swim in 1875; and Louis Blériot's pioneering flight followed in 1909.

Plans for an undersea tunnel, first laid as early as 1751, were finally achieved in 1994 with the opening of a railroad link between Fréthun and Folkestone.

Children watching Louis Blériot taking off, 1909

Musicians in place du Général de Gaulle, in the heart of Vieux Lille

Flandre Maritime ❻

Nord. 👥 *5,000.* ✈ *Lille.* 🚆 *Bergues.* ⛴ *Dunkerque.* ℹ *Bergues, Le Beffroi, pl Henri Billiaert (03 28 68 71 06).*

South of Dunkerque lies a flat, agricultural plain with narrow waterways and expansive skies – an archetypal Flemish landscape with canals, bicyclists, and ancient windmills. The **Noordmeulen**, built just north of Hondschoote in 1127, is thought to be the oldest windmill in Europe.

From Hondschoote the D3 follows the Canal de la Basse Colme west to Bergues, a fortified wool town with fine 16th–17th-century Flemish works in its **Musée Municipal**. Farther south, the hilltop town of **Cassel** has a cobbled Grande place with 16th–18th-century buildings, and views across Flanders and Belgium from its Jardin Public.

🏛 Musée Municipal

1 rue du Mont de Piété, Bergues. ***Tel*** *03 28 68 13 30.* ○ *Wed–Mon.* ● *Nov–Mar.* 📷

Lille ❼

Nord. 👥 *220,000.* ✈ 🚆 🚌 ℹ *Palais Rihour (03 59 57 94 00).* 🛒 *daily.* **www**.lilletourism.com

Transformed in recent years, not least by the advent of Eurostar and the city's election as European City of Culture 2004, Lille has excellent stores and markets and a powerful sense of its historic Flemish identity – the Flemish name (Rijssel) is still used and some of the area's million residents speak a Franco-Flemish patois. With heavy industry declining, the city has turned to hi-tech. A modern commercial quarter, including the Euralille shopping complex, adjoins Lille Europe station, the TGV/ Eurostar/ Thalys rail interchange. The city's metro, VAL, is a driverless automatic train.

The city's charm lies in its historic center, Vieux Lille – a mass of cobbled squares and narrow streets that are packed with stylish stores, cafés, and restaurants. Place du Général de Gaulle forms its hub, with façades including the 17th-century **Vieille Bourse** (Old Exchange). Adjacent stand the **Nouvelle Bourse** and the **Opéra**, both built in the early 20th century. The moated five-point brick Citadel by Vauban is also worth a look.

Flower stalls in the arcades of the Vieille Bourse in Lille

🏛 Musée de l'Hospice Comtesse

32 rue de la Monnaie. ***Tel*** *03 28 36 84 00.* ○ *Wed–Sun, Mon pm.* 📷

A hospital was founded here in 1237. Now its 15th- and 17th- century buildings house exhibitions. The Sick Room has a barrel-vaulted ceiling, the Community Wing a Delft kitchen. There is a collection of ancient instruments.

🏛 Palais des Beaux-Arts

Pl de la République. ***Tel*** *03 20 06 78 00.* ○ *Wed–Sun, Mon pm.* 📷 🎧 ♿

One of the best art collections outside Paris, the museum is strong on Flemish works, including Rubens and Van Dyck. Other highlights are *Paradise and Hell* by Dirk Bouts, Van Goyen's *The Skaters,* Goya's *The Letter*, Delacroix's *Médée*, works by Courbet, and Impressionist paintings.

Arras ❽

Pas de Calais. 👥 *45,000.* 🚆 🚌
ℹ *Hôtel de Ville, pl des Héros (03 21 51 26 95).* ⛺ *Wed, Sat.*
www.ot-arras.fr

The center of Arras, capital of the Artois region, is graced by two picturesque cobbled squares enclosed by 155 houses with 17th-century Flemish-style façades. A triumph of postwar reconstruction, each residence in the **Grand' place** and the smaller place des Héros has a slightly varying design, with some original store signs still visible.

A monumental **Hôtel de Ville**, rebuilt in the Flamboyant Gothic style, stands at the west end of place des Héros – in the foyer are two giants, Colas Dédé and Jacqueline, who swagger round the town during local festivals. From the basement you can take an elevator up to the belfry for superb views, or take a guided tour into the labyrinth of underground passages below Arras. These were cut in the limestone in the 10th century. They have often served as shelter and during World War I as a subterranean army camp.

The huge Abbaye St-Vaast includes an 18th–19th-century Neoclassical cathedral and the **Musée des Beaux-Arts**. The museum contains some fine examples of medieval sculpture including a pair of beautiful 13th-century angels. Among other exhibits are a local *arras* (hanging tapestry) and 19th-century works by the School of Arras, a group of realist landscape painters.

Hôtel de Ville
Pl des Héros. ***Tel*** *03 21 51 26 95.* ○ *Jul–Aug daily.* ✋ *oblig. for tunnels.* ✋

🏛 Musée des Beaux Arts
22 rue Paul Doumer. ***Tel*** *03 21 71 26 43.* ○ *Wed–Mon.* ● *public hols.* ✋

Vallée de la Somme ❾

Somme. ✈ 🚆 🚌 *Amiens.* ℹ *Rue Louis XI, Péronne (03 22 84 42 38).* **www**.somme-tourisme.com

Roadside shrine, Somme Valley

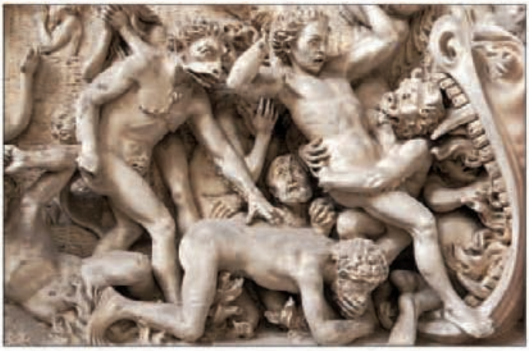
Boating on the river Somme

The name of the Somme is synonymous with the slaughter and horror of trench warfare during World War I *(see pp190-91)*. Yet the Somme valley also means pretty countryside, a vast estuary wetland, and abundant wildlife. Lakes and woods alongside provide enjoyable camping, walking, and fishing.

Battlefields lie along the river and its tributaries north and northeast of Amiens, and extend north to Arras. Tidy World War I Commonwealth cemeteries cover the area. The **Historial de la Grande Guerre** at Péronne gives a thoughful introduction. Parc Mémorial Beaumont-Hamel, near Albert, is a real battlefield being allowed to disappear in its own time. Travel to Vimy Ridge Canadian Memorial, near Arras, to see a bloodbath battle site preserved as it was, and to Notre-Dame de Lorette, the landmark French National Cemetery.

West of Amiens, **Samara** – Amiens' Gallo-Roman name – is France's largest archeological park, with reconstructions of prehistoric dwellings and exhibitions explaining early crafts like flint-cutting and corn-grinding. Farther downstream, Eglise St-Vulfran at Abbeville is noted for its Flamboyant Gothic west front with beautifully carved 16th-century door panels.

St-Valéry-sur-Somme is a charming harbor resort with a historic upper town and a tree-lined promenade looking across the estuary. William departed for England from here in 1066. Birdwatchers should visit the Maison de l'Oiseau on the D3 nearby, or the Parc Ornithologique de Marquenterre on the far shore near delightful Le Crotoy. In summer, a little train links the two sides, passing through dunes and marshes.



16th-century carvings on Eglise St-Vulfran in Abbeville, Somme Valley

🏛 Historial de la Grande Guerre
Château de Péronne. ***Tel*** *03 22 83 14 18.* ○ *Oct–Mar: Tue–Sun; Apr–Sep: daily.* ● *mid-Dec–mid-Jan.* ✋ ♿ ✋ **www**.historial.org

🏛 Samara
La Chaussée-Tirancourt. ***Tel*** *03 22 51 82 83.* ○ *mid-Mar–mid-Nov: daily.* ✋ ♿ **www**.samara.fr

Amiens ⑩

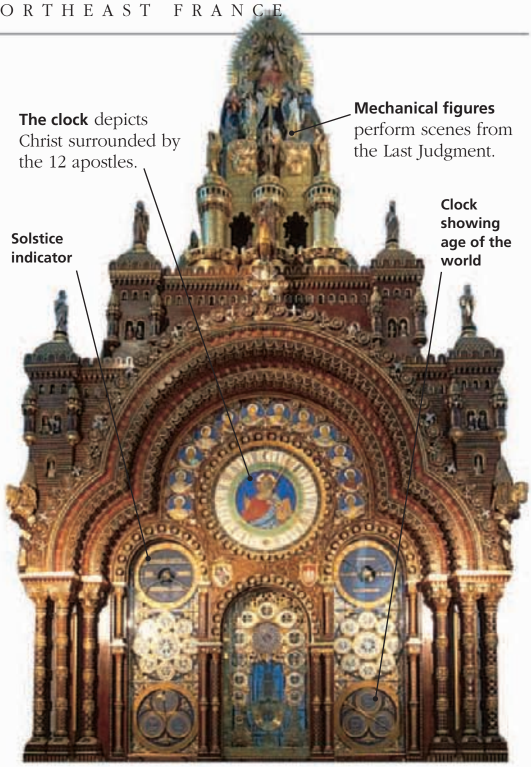
Somme. 👥 *130,000.* 🚆 🚌
ℹ *6 bis rue Dusevel (03 22 71 60 50).*
🛒 *Wed & Sat.*
www.amiens-tourisme.com

There is more to Amiens, the capital of Picardy, than its **Cathédrale Notre-Dame** *(see pp202–3)*. The picturesque quarter of St-Leu is a pedestrianized area of low houses and flower-lined canals with waterside restaurants, bars, and artisans' stores. Farther east are **Les Hortillonnages**, a colorful patchwork of marshland market gardens, once tended by farmers using punts which now ferry visitors around the protected natural site.

The **Musée de Picardie** has many fine medieval and 19th-century sculptures and 16th–20th-century paintings, including a remarkable set of 16th-century group portraits, commissioned as offerings to the cathedral. To the south is the Cirque d'Hiver which Jules Verne (1828–1905) inaugurated in 1889. **Maison de Jules Verne**, his renovated home, has over 700 objects spread over four floors relating to the famous author, who lived here from 1882 until 1900.

🏛 Musée de Picardie
48 rue de la République.
Tel *03 22 97 14 00.* ○ *Tue–Sun.*
● *Jan 1, May 1, Nov 1 & 11, Dec 25.* 📷 ♿

🏛 Maison de Jules Verne
2 rue Charles Dubois. ***Tel*** *03 22 45 45 75.* ○ *Easter–mid-Oct: daily; mid-Oct– Easter: Wed–Mon.* 📷


The clock depicts Christ surrounded by the 12 apostles.

Mechanical figures perform scenes from the Last Judgment.

Solstice indicator

Clock showing age of the world

Astronomical clock in Beauvais cathedral

Beauvais ⑪

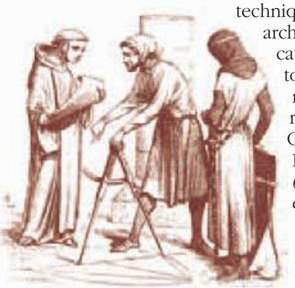
Oise. 👥 *58,000.* ✈ 🚆 🚌 ℹ *1 rue Beauregard (03 44 15 30 30).* 🛒 *Wed, Sat.* **www**.beauvaistourisme.fr

Heavily bombed in World War II, Beauvais is now a modern town with one outstanding jewel. Though never completed, **Cathédrale St-Pierre** is a poignant, neck-cricking finale to the vaulting ambition that created the great Gothic cathedrals. In 1227 work began on a building designed to soar above all predecessors, but the roof of the chancel caved in twice from lack of support before its completion in the early 14th century. Delayed by wars and inadequate funds, the transept was not completed until 1550. In 1573 its crossing collapsed after a tower and spire were added. What remains today is nevertheless a masterpiece, rising 157 ft (48 m) high. In the transept much of the original 16th-century stained glass survives, while near the north door is a 90,000-part astronomical clock assembled in the 1860s. What would have been the nave is still occupied by the remnants of a 10th-century church known as the Basse-Oeuvre.

The former Bishop's Palace is now home to the **Musée Départemental de l'Oise**. The collection includes archeological finds, medieval sculpture, tapestries, and local ceramics. Beauvais has a long tradition of tapestry manufacture, and examples from

VIOLLET-LE-DUC

The renowned architectural theorist Viollet-le-Duc (1814–79) was the first to fully appreciate Gothic architecture. His 1854 dictionary of architecture celebrated medieval building techniques, showing that the arches and tracery of Gothic cathedrals were solutions to architectural problems, not mere decoration. His restoration work included Château de Pierrefonds, Notre-Dame in Paris *(see pp86–7)*, and Carcassonne *(see pp488–9)*.


Medieval architects, as drawn by Viollet-le-Duc

the French national collection are shown in the **Galerie Nationale de la Tapisserie.**

🏛 Musée Départemental de l'Oise
Ancien Palais Episcopal, 1 rue du Musée. ***Tel*** *03 44 11 43 83.*
○ *Wed–Mon.* ● *Jan 1, Easter, May 1, Jun 9, Dec 25.* ♿

🏛 Galerie Nationale de la Tapisserie
22 rue St-Pierre. ***Tel*** *03 44 15 39 10.*
○ *Tue–Sun.* ♿ ● *Jan 1, Dec 25.*

The rib-vaulted nave of Cathédrale de Notre-Dame, Noyon

Noyon ⓬

Oise. 👥 *15,200.* 🚆 ℹ *pl de l'Hôtel de Ville (03 44 44 21 88).* 🛒 *Wed & Sat, first Tue of each month.* **www**.noyon-tourisme.com

Noyon has long been a religious center. The **Cathédrale de Notre-Dame**, dating from 1150, is the fifth to be built on this site and was completed by 1290. It provides a harmonious example of the transition from Romanesque to Gothic style.

A local history museum, the **Musée du Noyonnais** occupies part of the former Bishop's Palace, and at the cathedral's east end is a rare half-timbered chapter library built in 1506.

Jean Calvin, the Protestant theologian and one of the leaders of the Reformation, was born here in 1509 and is commemorated in the small **Musée Jean Calvin.**

🏛 Musée du Noyonnais
Ancien Palais Episcopal, 7 rue de l'Evêché. ***Tel*** *03 44 44 03 59.*
○ *Wed-Mon.* ● *Jan 1, Nov 11, Dec 25.* ♿

Path through Forêt de Compiègne

Compiègne ⓭

Oise. 👥 *50,000.* 🚆 🚌 ℹ *pl de l'Hôtel de Ville (03 44 40 01 00).* 🛒 *Wed & Sat.* **www**.compiegne-tourisme.fr

Compiegne is where Joan of Arc was captured by the Burgundians in 1430. A 16th-century Hôtel de Ville with a towering belfry rules over the center, but the town is most famous for its royal **Château**.

Designed as a summer residence for Louis XV, the château was completed by Louis XVI, restored by Napoleon, and later became a residence of Napoleon III and Empress Eugénie. Tours of the Imperial Apartments take in private chambers, such as the sumptuous bedrooms of Napoleon I and Marie-Louise.

Within the château, the Musée du Second Empire and Musée de l'Impératrice display furniture, memorabilia, and portraits, while the Musée de la Voiture is an entertaining assembly of historic carriages, bicycles, and early motor cars.

South and east of the town the old hunting grounds of **Forêt de Compiègne** spread as far as Pierrefonds, with ample space for walks and picnics beneath its oaks and beeches. East of the D130 Les Beaux Monts provide majestic views back to the château.

The Clairière de l'Armistice, north of the N31, marks the spot where the armistice of World War I was signed on November 11, 1918. The small **Musée Wagon de l'Armistice** has a replica of the railroad carriage where the ceremony took place, which was used again in World War II by Hitler as a humiliating venue for the signing of the French surrender on June 22, 1940.

♜ Château de Compiègne
Pl du Général de Gaulle. ***Tel*** *03 44 38 37 02.* ○ *Wed–Mon.* ● *Jan 1, May 1, Nov 1, Dec 25.* ♿ **www**.musee-chateau-compiegne.fr

🏛 Musée Wagon de l'Armistice
Clairière de l'Armistice (direc. Soissons). ***Tel*** *03 44 85 14 18.*
○ *Wed–Mon.* ● *Jan: Mon am, Jan 1, Dec 25.* ♿

Château de Pierrefonds

Château de Pierrefonds ⓮

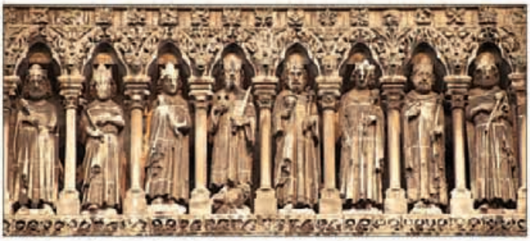
Oise. ***Tel*** *03 44 42 72 72.*
○ *daily.* ● *Jan 1, May 1, Nov 1 & 11, Dec 25.* ♿ 🎵 ***Concerts***

The immense Château de Pierrefonds dominates the small village below. A mighty castle was constructed here by Louis d'Orléans in the 14th century, but by 1813 it had become a picturesque ruin which Napoleon I purchased for less than 3,000 francs.

In 1857, Napoleon III commissioned the architect Viollet-le-Duc to restore it, and in 1884 Pierrefonds was reborn as a museum of fortification. The exterior, with its moat, drawbridge, towers, and double sentry walks, is a diligent reconstruction of medieval military architecture. The interior, by contrast, is enlivened by the romantic fancies of Viollet-le-Duc and his patron. There are guided tours and a historical exhibition.

Amiens Cathedral

Work on the largest cathedral in France started around 1220, financed by profits from the cultivation of woad, a plant valued for its blue dye. It was built to house the head of St. John the Baptist, brought back from the Crusades in 1206 and a magnet for pilgrims, which is still displayed here. Within 50 years Notre-Dame was complete, a masterpiece of engineering – Gothic architecture carried to a bold extreme. Restored in the 1850s by Viollet-le-Duc *(see p200)*, and having miraculously survived two World Wars, the cathedral is famous for its rich array of statues and reliefs, which inspired John Ruskin's *The Bible of Amiens* in 1884.

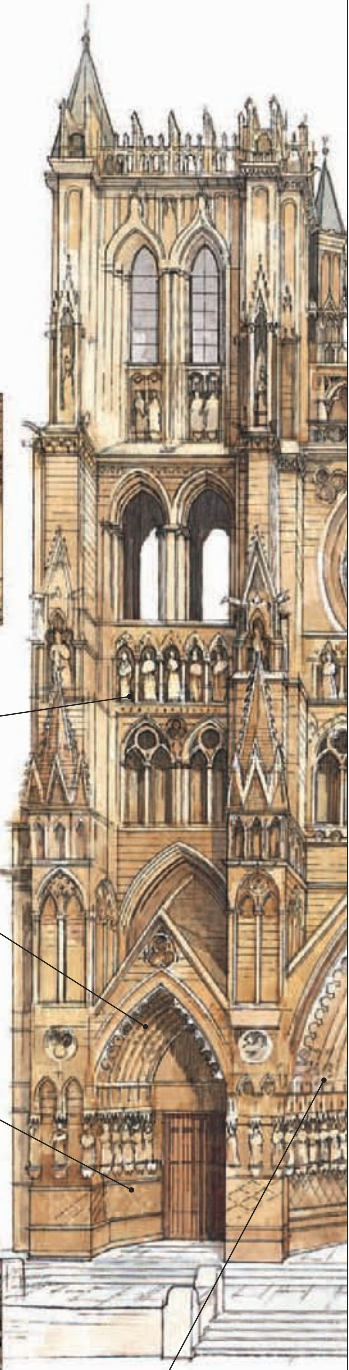


★ West Front
The King's Gallery, a row of 22 colossal statues representing the kings of France, spans the west front. The statues are also thought to symbolize the Kings of Judah.

Weeping Angel
Sculpted by Nicolas Blasset in 1628, this sentimental statue in the ambulatory became a popular image during World War I.

STAR FEATURES

- ★ West Front
- ★ Nave
- ★ Choir Stalls
- ★ Choir Screens



St. Firmin Portal is decorated with figures and scenes from the life of St. Firmin, the martyr who brought Christianity to Picardy and became the first bishop of Amiens.

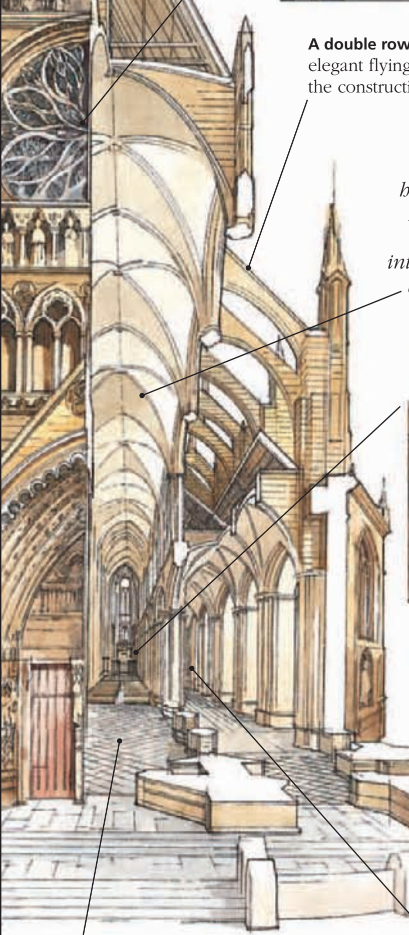
The Calendar shows signs from the Zodiac, with the corresponding monthly labors below. It depicts everyday life in the 13th century.

Central Portal
Scenes from the Last Judgment adorn the tympanum, with the Beau Dieu, *a statue of Christ, between the doors.*

Towers
Two towers of unequal height frame the west front. The south tower was completed in 1366; the north in 1402. The spire was replaced twice, in 1627 and 1887.

VISITORS' CHECKLIST

Cathédrale Notre-Dame, pl Notre-Dame. ***Tel*** *03 22 80 03 41.* ○ *Apr–Sep: 8:30am–6:30pm; Oct–Mar: 8:30am–5:30pm.* ● *Jan 1, last Sun Sep.* ✝ *9am daily (Wed: noon); Sun: 9am, 10:15am, 11:30am, 6pm.* 📷 ♿



The Flamboyant tracery of the rose window was created in the 16th century.

A double row comprising 22 elegant flying buttresses supports the construction.

The flooring was laid down in 1288 and reassembled in the late 19th century. The faithful followed its labyrinthine shape on their knees.

★ Nave
Soaring 42 m (138 ft) high, with support from 126 slender pillars, the brightly illuminated interior of Notre-Dame is a hymn to the vertical.

★ Choir Stalls
The 110 oak choir stalls (1508–19) are delicately carved with over 4,000 biblical, mythical, and real-life figures.

★ Choir Screens
Vivid scenes from the lives of St. Firmin and St. John, carved in the 15th–16th centuries, adorn the ambulatory.

Senlis ⑮

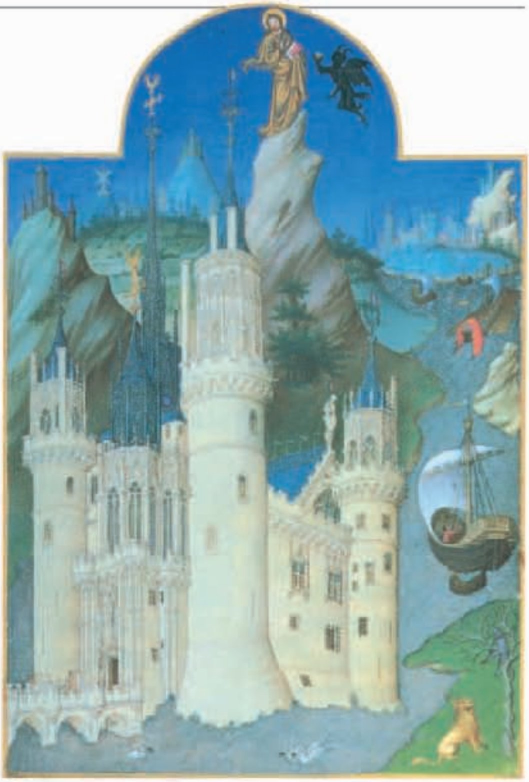
Oise. 👥 *17,000.* 🚌 ℹ *pl du Parvis Notre-Dame (03 44 53 06 40).* 🛒 *Tue & Fri.* **www**.senlis-tourisme.fr

Senlis, 6 miles (10 km) east of Chantilly, is worth visiting for its Gothic cathedral and the well-preserved historic streets in the old town that surround it. **Cathédrale Notre-Dame** was constructed during the second half of the 12th century and the sculpted central doorway of its west front, depicting the Assumption of the Virgin, influenced later cathedrals such as Amiens *(see pp202–3)*. The spire of the south tower dates from the 13th century, while the Flamboyant south transept, built in the mid-16th century, makes an ornate contrast with the austerity of earlier years. Opposite the west front, a gateway leads to the ruins of the Château Royal and its gardens. Here the **Musée de la Vénerie**, housed in a former priory, celebrates hunting through paintings, old weapons, and trophies.

The **Musée d'Art** recalls the town's Gallo-Roman past, and also has an excellent collection of early Gothic sculpture.

🏛 Musée de la Vénerie
Château Royal, pl du Parvis Notre-Dame. ***Tel*** *03 44 32 00 81.* ○ *Wed pm–Mon.* ● *Jan 1, May 1, Dec 25.* ♿ ✋ *obligatory.*

🏛 Musée d'Art et d'Archéologie
Ancien Evêché, 2 pl Notre-Dame. ***Tel*** *03 44 32 00 81.* ○ *Wed pm–Mon.* ● *Jan 1, May 1, Dec 25.* ♿



***Les Très Riches Heures du Duc de Berry*, on show in Chantilly**

Chantilly ⑯

Oise. 👥 *12,500.* 🚆 🚌 ℹ *60 av du Maréchal Joffre (03 44 67 37 37).* 🛒 *Wed & Sat.* **www**.chantilly-tourisme.com

The horse-racing capital of France, Chantilly offers a classy combination of château, park, and forest that has long made it a popular excursion. With origins in Gallo-Roman times, the château of today started to take shape in 1528 when the famous Anne de Montmorency, Constable of France, had the old fortress replaced and added the Petit Château. During the time of the Great Prince of Condé (1621–86), renovation work continued and Le Nôtre created a park and fountains which made even Louis XIV jealous. Destroyed in the Revolution,

CHANTILLY HORSE RACING

Chantilly is the capital of thoroughbred racing in France, a shrine to the long-standing love affair between the French upper classes and the world of horses. It was the firm belief of Prince Louis-Henri de Bourbon, creator of Chantilly's monumental Grandes Ecuries, that he would one day be reincarnated as a horse. Horse racing was introduced from England around 1830 and soon became very popular. The first official race meeting was held here in 1834 and today around 3,000 horses are trained in the surrounding forests and countryside. Every June, Chantilly becomes the focus of the social and flat racing season when top riders and their thoroughbreds compete for its two historic trophies, the Prix du Jockey-Club and Prix de Diane-Hermès.

Prix Equipage de Hermès, one of many prestigious races at Chantilly

the Grand Château was again rebuilt and its receptions and hunting parties became crowded by the fashionable high society of the 1820s–30s. It was finally replaced by a Renaissance-style château in the late 19th century.

Today the Grand Château and the Petit Château form the **Musée Condé**, displaying art treasures collected by its last private owner, the Duke of Aumale. These include work by Raphael, Botticelli, Poussin, and Ingres, and an entertaining gallery of 16th-century portraits by the Clouet brothers. Among the most precious items is the famous 15th-century illuminated manuscript *Les Très Riches Heures du Duc de Berry*, reproductions of which are on view. You can also tour the stately apartments, with decorative conceits ranging from frolicking monkeys to triumphant battles.

Both châteaux are somewhat upstaged by the magnificent stables (Grandes Ecuries), an equestrian palace designed by Jean Aubert in 1719 which could accommodate 240 horses and 500 dogs. It is occupied by the **Musée Vivant du Cheval**, presenting various breeds of horses and ponies, and riding displays.

🏛 **Musée Condé**
Château de Chantilly. ***Tel*** *03 44 62 62 62.* ○ *Wed–Mon.* 💶 👉

🐦 **Musée Vivant du Cheval**
Grandes Ecuries du Prince de Condé, Chantilly. ***Tel*** *03 44 57 13 13.*
○ *Wed–Mon (winter pms only).*
💶 ♿ **www**.museeducheval.fr

Parc Astérix ⑰

Plailly. ☎ *03 44 62 34 34.* ○ *Apr–Aug: daily; Sep–early Oct: Wed & w/e.* ● *some Mon & Fri in May–Jun (check).* 💶 ♿ **www**.parcasterix.fr

Near Charles de Gaulle Airport a small fortified Gaulish village has its own customs controls, currency, and radio station (Menhir FM). One of the most popular theme parks in France, it is dedicated to Asterix the Gaul and all the other characters in Goscinny and Uderzo's famous cartoon strip: Getafix, Obelix, Cacofonix *et al.* The Romans are driven crazy as they try to subdue these larger-than-life Gauls, who dodge patrolling Roman centurions. Hilarious battles take place.

The Parc is as much about French history as about the cartoons. Via Antiqua and the Roman City are lighthearted but genuinely educational. Rue de Paris shows Paris through the centuries, including the construction of Notre-Dame cathedral. There are non-historical attractions too, like a dolphinarium and Zeus' Thunder high-speed rollercoaster. Check out the latest rides – there's usually something new every year.

Asterix with friends, Parc Astérix

Laon ⑱

Aisne. 👥 *26,000.* 🚉 ℹ *Hôtel-Dieu, pl du Parvis Gauthier de Montagne (03 23 20 28 62).* 🧺 *Wed–Thu & Sat.* **www**.tourisme-paysdelaon.com

The capital of the Aisne *département*, Laon occupies a dramatic site on top of a long, narrow ridge surrounded by wide plains. The old town, on top of the mount, is best approached by Poma, an automated cable car that swings up from the train station to the place du Général Leclerc.

The pedestrianized rue Châtelaine, a main shopping street in Laon

Rose window in the 13th-century Cathédrale de Notre-Dame, Laon

The pedestrianized rue Châtelaine leads to Laon's splendid **Cathédrale de Notre-Dame**. Completed in 1235, the cathedral lost two of its original seven towers in the Revolution but remains an impressive monument to the early Gothic style.

Details include the deep porches of the west façade, the four-story nave, and the carved Renaissance screens enclosing its side chapels. The immense 13th-century rose window in the apse represents the Glorification of the Church. Protruding from the cathedral's western towers are statues paying tribute to the oxen used to haul up stone for its construction.

The rest of medieval Laon rewards casual strolling: a promenade rings the 16th-century **Citadelle** farther east, while to the south you can follow the ramparts past the Porte d'Ardon and Porte des Chenizelles to **Eglise St-Martin**, with views of the cathedral from rue Thibesard.

South of Laon is Chemin des Dames, named after Louis XV's daughters who used to take this route, but more often remembered as a World War I battlefield and lined with cemeteries and memorials.

CHAMPAGNE

MARNE · ARDENNES · AUBE · HAUTE-MARNE

Champagne is a name of great resonance, conjuring up images of celebration and the world-famous cathedral at Reims. Yet beyond the glamor lies an unspoiled rural idyll of two strikingly contrasting landscapes: the rolling plains of Champagne, giving way to lakes and water meadows to the south, and the dense forests and hills of the Ardennes in the north.

The so-called "sacred triangle of Champagne," linking Épernay, Reims, and Châlons-en-Champagne, is like a magnet for wine lovers. Here, the experience of drinking fine champagne is enhanced by gourmet meals of stuffed trout, Ardennes ham, and the famous sausages called *andouillettes.*

The sign-posted *route touristique du champagne* wends its way through vineyards towards endless cereal plains stretching southward to the "lake district," an area of oak forests, water meadows, and streams.

On the border between France and Belgium lies the Ardennes, named after the Celtic word for deep forest. This wild border land of dramatic valleys, deciduous forests, and hills is cut by the meanderings of the river Meuse. Border fortifications include the vast citadel of Sedan and the star-shaped town and fortress of Rocroi, as well as the Maginot Line outposts built before World War II. The Ardennes may offer appealing countryside but Champagne is culturally superior, with impressive towns that have painstakingly restored historic centers. It has some striking churches, from the Gothic majesty of Reims cathedral to the rustic charm of its typical half-timbered *champenoises* churches. These feature vivid stained-glass windows by the famous School of Troyes, whose subtle craftsmanship seems to typify the appeal of this quiet region.

Timber-framed *champenoise* church at Lac du Der-Chantecoq

◁ **Cathédrale St-Etienne at Châlons-en-Champagne**

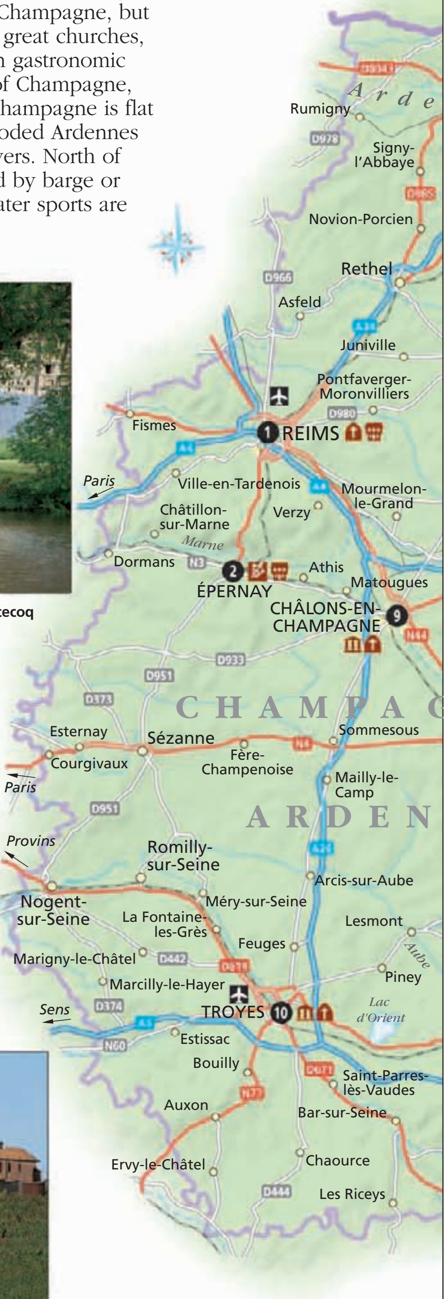
Exploring Champagne

Champagne's fizz draws wine lovers to the sacred triangle between Reims, Épernay, and Châlons-en-Champagne, but the region also attracts culture lovers to its great churches, notably Reims Cathedral. Reims abounds in gastronomic restaurants but Troyes, the former capital of Champagne, makes the most delightful base. Much of Champagne is flat or gently undulating, and the wild and wooded Ardennes to the north attracts walkers and nature-lovers. North of Reims, the Ardennes canal can be explored by barge or pleasure boat from Rethel; to the south, water sports are popular on the lakes to the east of Troyes.

Fishing by a canal in Montier-en-Der near Lac du Der-Chantecoq

GETTING AROUND

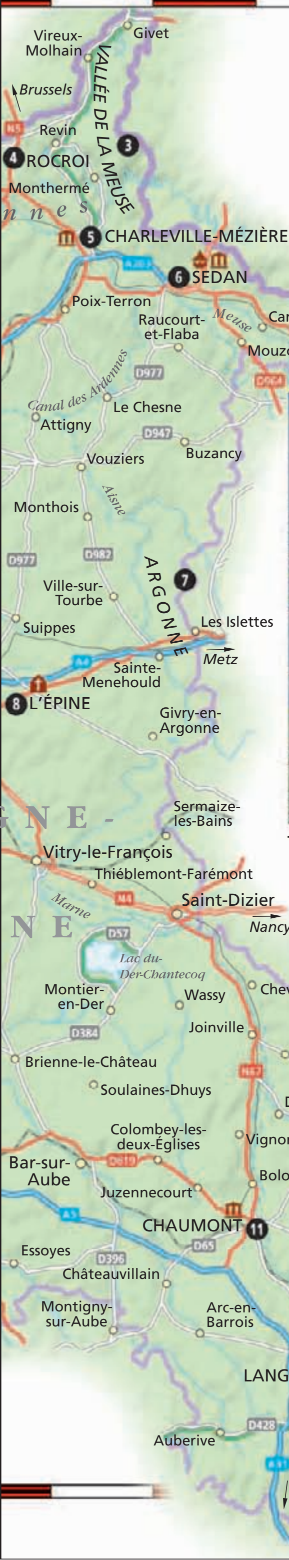
The region's main autoroute is the A26, which reaches Reims in under 3 hours from Calais, and also provides easy access to most of the region all the way down to Troyes and Langres (via the A5). The A4 highway also links Reims to Paris and Alsace. Paris-Reims by the new TGV high-speed train takes 45 minutes. Rail transport within the region is reasonably good, and so are the roads. To explore the wine-growing region, follow the signposted roads marked "Route de Champagne."



Arde
Rumigny
D978
Signy-l'Abbaye
Novion-Porcien
D966
Rethel
Asfeld
Juniville
Pontfaverger-Moronvilliers
D980
Fismes
1 REIMS
A4
Paris
Ville-en-Tardenois
Mourmelon-le-Grand
Châtillon-sur-Marne
Verzy
Marne
Dormans
N3
2 ÉPERNAY
Athis
Matougues
CHÂLONS-EN-CHAMPAGNE 9
N44
D933
D951
D373
CHAMPAG
Esternay
Sézanne
Fère-Champenoise
Sommesous
N4
Courgivaux
Paris
Mailly-le-Camp
D951
ARDEN
Provins
Romilly-sur-Seine
A26
Arcis-sur-Aube
Nogent-sur-Seine
Méry-sur-Seine
La Fontaine-les-Grès
Lesmont
Feuges
Aube
Marigny-le-Châtel
D442
D619
Piney
Marcilly-le-Hayer
Sens
D374
TROYES 10
Lac d'Orient
A5
Estissac
N60
Bouilly
D671
Saint-Parres-lès-Vaudes
N77
Auxon
Bar-sur-Seine
Chaource
Ervy-le-Châtel
D444
Les Riceys

Windmill at Verzenay, Parc Naturel de la Montagne de Reims

For additional map symbols *see back flap*


Vireux-Molhain
Givet
Brussels
VALLÉE DE LA MEUSE
3
Revin
4 ROCROI
Monthermé
n n e s
5 CHARLEVILLE-MÉZIÈRES
6 SEDAN
Poix-Terron
Raucourt-et-Flaba
Meuse
Carignan
Mouzon
D977
D964
Canal des Ardennes
Le Chesne
Attigny
D947
Buzancy
Vouziers
Aisne
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ARGONNE
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Ville-sur-Tourbe
Suippes
Les Islettes
Metz
Sainte-Menehould
8 L'ÉPINE
Givry-en-Argonne
Sermaize-les-Bains
G N E -
Vitry-le-François
Thiéblemont-Farémont
Marne
N E
Saint-Dizier
Nancy
D57
Lac du-Der-Chantecoq
Montier-en-Der
Wassy
Chevillon
Joinville
D384
Poissons
Brienne-le-Château
N67
D427
Soulaines-Dhuys
Doulaincourt
Colombey-les-deux-Églises
N74
Vignory
Andelot
Bar-sur-Aube
D619
Bologne
Bourmont
Nancy
Juzennecourt
D74
A5
CHAUMONT 11
A31
Clefmont
Meuse
Essoyes
D396
D65
D417
Châteauvillain
Nogent-en-Bassigny
Montigny-sur-Aube
Arc-en-Barrois
Bourbonne-les-Bains
D417
LANGRES 12
Laferté-sur-Amance
N19
Chalindrey
Fayl-Billot
D428
Auberive
Longeau
Vesoul
A31
Dijon

RUINART
PÈRE ET FILS

A *grande marque* champagne from Reims

SIGHTS AT A GLANCE

- Argonne ❼
- Châlons-en-Champagne ❾
- Charleville-Mézières ❺
- Chaumont ⓫
- Épernay ❷
- L'Épine ❽
- Langres ⓬
- Reims ❶
- Rocroi ❹
- Sedan ❻
- Troyes ❿
- Vallée de la Meuse ❸

The Old Town in Monthermé in Vallée de la Meuse, encircled by the river

KEY

- Highway
- Major road
- Secondary road
- Minor road
- Scenic route
- Main railroad
- Minor railroad
- International border
- Regional border

0 kilometers 25

0 miles 25

Gilded reliquary (1896), with body of St Remi, in Basilique St-Remi, Reims

Reims ❶

Marne. 👥 *200,000.* ✈ 🚆 🚌
ℹ *2 rue Guillaume de Machault (08 92 70 13 51).* ⊖ *daily.*
www.reims-tourisme.com

Pronounced like the French word "prince" without the "p," Reims is home to some of the best known *grandes marques* in Champagne, and several are grouped around the Basilique St-Remi. But the city has another, much earlier, claim to fame: since the 11th century all the kings of France have come to this "city of coronations" to be crowned in its remarkable Gothic **Cathédrale Notre-Dame** *(see pp212–13).*

Although World War II bombing destroyed much of Reims' architectural coherence, there are some remarkable monuments here. The **Crypto-portique**, part of the forum, and Porte Mars, a triumphal Augustan arch, recall the Roman past. In 1945, the German surrender was taken in the **Musée de la Reddition** in Eisenhower's French HQ during World War II. **Musée des Beaux Arts** houses a fine collection of 15th- and 16th-century canvases depicting biblical scenes, portraits by the Cranachs, *The Death of Marat* by David, and more than 20 land-scapes by Corot. Also here are the Barbizons, Impressionists, and modern masters.

In 1996 Reims celebrated the 1,500-year anniversary of the baptism of Clovis, first King of the Franks, in its cathedral.

Ancien Collège des Jésuites & Planetarium

1 pl Museux. ***Tel*** *03 26 35 34 70.*
Collège 🎫 *(Planetarium).*
Founded in 1606, this college was a hospice until 1976. Nowadays its 300-year-old vines, Romanesque wine cellars, and Baroque interior play their part as atmospheric film sets, notably for the film of Zola's *Germinal* (1992) and *Queen Margot* (1993). High-lights include the refectory's ceiling and the kitchen, the only room where fireplaces were permitted in an austere Jesuit establishment. A double spiral staircase leads to a Baroque library with yet another magnificent ceiling. Housed in the same building since 1979 is the **Planetarium**, with views of the sky from everywhere in the world.

Basilique St-Remi

Pl St-Rémi. ◯ *daily.* ♿
This Benedictine abbey church, the oldest church in Reims, began as a Carolingian basilica dedicated to Saint Rémi (440–533). Inside, an Early Gothic choir and radiating

Porte Mars, a reminder of Reims in Roman times

METHODE CHAMPENOISE

To produce its characteristic bubbles, champagne has to undergo a process of double fermentation.
First fermentation: The base wine, made from rather acidic grapes, is fermented at 68°–71.6°F in either stainless steel tanks or, occasionally, in oak barrels. It is then siphoned off from the sediment and kept at colder temperatures to clear completely, before being drawn off and blended with wines from other areas and years (except in the case of vintage champagne). The wine is bottled and the *liqueur de tirage* (sugar, wine, and yeast) is added. **Second fermentation:** The bottles are stored for a year or more in cool, chalky cellars. The yeast converts the sugar to alcohol and carbon dioxide, which produces the sparkle, and the yeast cells die leaving a deposit. To remove this, the inverted bottles are turned and tapped daily *(remuage)* to shift the deposits into the neck of the bottle. Finally, the deposits are expelled by the process known as *dégorgement*, and a bit of sugar syrup *(liqueur d'expédition)* is added to adjust the sweetness before the final cork is inserted.

Champagne Mumm of Reims

chapels can be seen, as well as sculpted Romanesque capitals in the north transept.

🏛 Musée St-Remi

53 rue Simon. ***Tel*** *03 26 85 23 36.* ○ *daily pm only.* ● *Jan 1, May 1, Jul 14, Nov 1 & 11, Dec 25.* ¤
Set in the former abbey, the adjoining museum encloses the original Gothic chapterhouse within its cloistered 17th-century shell. On display are archeological artifacts, 15th-century tapestries depicting the life of Saint Remi, and a collection of weapons dating from the 16th–19th centuries.

🏛 Fort de la Pompelle

5 miles (8km) southeast of Reims. ***Tel*** *03 26 49 11 85.*
Built to protect Reims after the Franco-Prussian war, this fort houses a museum displaying a fine collection of German Imperial military headgear.

Épernay ❷

Marne. 👥 *28,000.* 🚉 ℹ *7 av de Champagne (03 26 53 33 00).* 🛒 *Wed, Sat & Sun.* **www**.ot-epernay.fr

The sole reason for visiting Épernay is to burrow into the chalky *caves* and taste the champagne. This rather undistinguished town lives off the fruits of its profitable champagne industry. As proof, the avenue de Champagne quarter abounds in mock-Renaissance mansions. **Moët & Chandon**, dating back to 1743, is the largest and slickest *maison*, the star of the Moët-Hennessy stable. Its cellars stretch some 18 miles (28 km) underground.

Statue of Dom Perignon at Moët

The group also owns other champagne houses, such as Mercier, Krug, Pommery, Veuve Clicquot, and Canard Duchêne.

There is little to choose between a visit to the cellars of Moët & Chandon or **Mercier** – both are in Avenue de Champagne. Mercier has the distinction of displaying a giant tun (cask) created for the 1889 Paris Exhibition, and takes you through the *caves* in an electric train.

De Castellaneoffers a more personalized tour, accompanied by a heady *dégustation*.

🏛 Moët & Chandon

20 av de Champagne. ***Tel*** *03 26 51 20 20.* ○ *Apr–mid-Nov: daily; mid-Nov–Mar: Mon–Fri.* ¤ ☞ *only.* **www**.moet.com

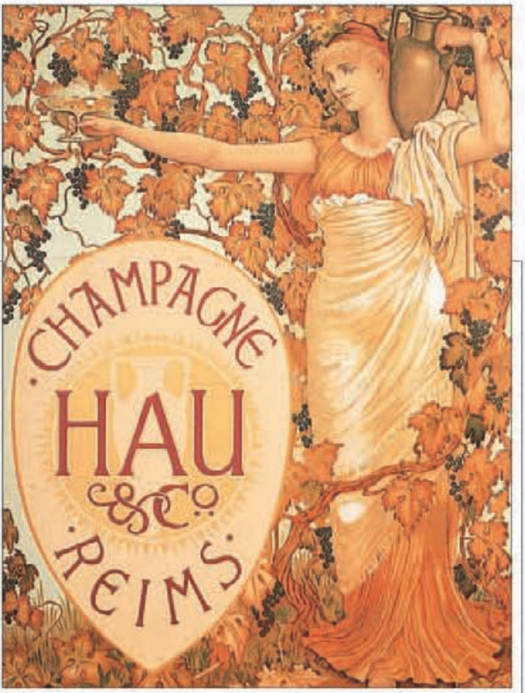
🏛 Mercier

70 av de Champagne. ***Tel*** *03 26 51 22 22.* ○ *mid-Mar–Nov: daily; Dec–mid-Mar: Thu–Mon.* ¤ ♿ ☞ *oblig.* **www**.champagnemercier.com

🏛 De Castellane

57 rue de Verdun. ***Tel*** *03 26 51 19 19.* ○ *daily (Jan–Mar: Sat & Sun only).* ¤ ♿ *restr.* ☞ *obligatory.* **www**.castellane.com

Dégorgement *is the final removal of the yeast deposits from the bottle. The neck of the bottle is plunged in freezing brine and the frozen block of sediment is then removed.*



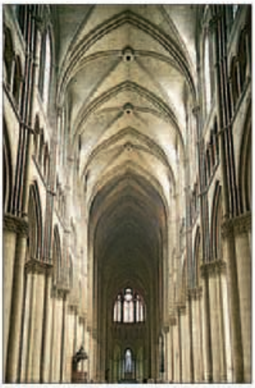
Seductive marketing *of champagne since the 19th century has ensured its continuing success.*

The bubbles in champagne *are produced during the second fermentation. Champagnes, especially vintage ones, improve with ageing.*

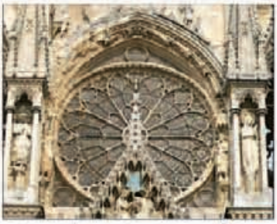
Reims Cathedral

The magnificent Gothic Cathédrale Notre-Dame at Reims is noted for its harmony and monumentality. A cathedral has stood on this site since 401, but the present building was begun in 1211. Reims has been the backdrop for coronations from medieval times until 1825, when Charles X was crowned. The coronation of Charles VII here in 1429 was attended by Joan of Arc.

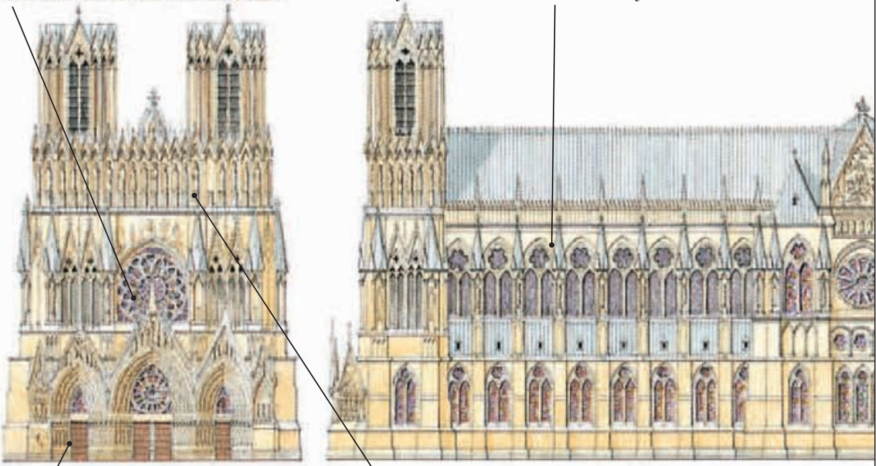
During the Revolution, the rood screen and windows were destroyed but the stonework survived. World War I damage was finally fully restored in 1996, to coincide with the 1,500th anniversary of the baptism of Clovis, King of the Franks, at Reims, which was considered the first coronation of a French king.

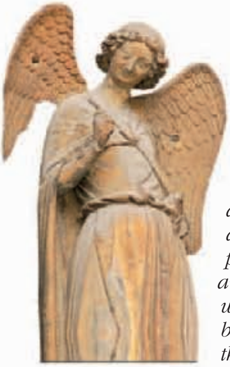


The Nave
Compared with the nave at Chartres (see pp308–11), *Reims is taller. Its elegant capitals are decorated with naturalistic floral motifs such as ivy and berries.*

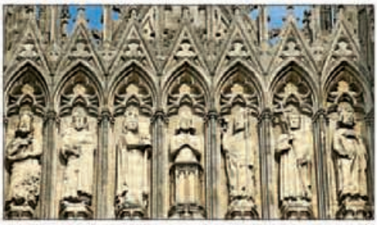


★ Great Rose Window
Best seen at sunset, the 13th-century window shows the Virgin surrounded by the apostles and angel musicians. It is set within a larger window, a feature common in 13th-century architecture.





★ Smiling Angel
Rich in statuary, Reims is often called "the cathedral of angels." Situated above the left (north) portal, this enigmatic angel with unfurled wings is the most celebrated of the many that grace the building.



★ Gallery of the Kings
The harmonious west façade, decorated with over 2,300 statues, is the most notable feature at Reims. Fifty-six stone effigies of French kings form the Gallery of the Kings.

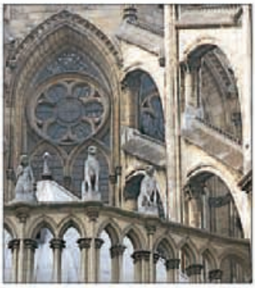
PALAIS DU TAU

The archbishop's palace adjoining the cathedral is named after its T-shaped design, based on early episcopal crosses. (Tau is Greek for T.) The palace, built in 1690 by Mansart and Robert de Cotte, encloses a Gothic Chapel and the 15th-century Salle du Tau, rooms associated with French coronations. On the eve of a coronation, the future king would spend the night in the palace. After being crowned in the cathedral, he held a magnificent banquet in the palace. The Salle du Tau, or banqueting hall, is the finest room in the palace, with a magnificent barrel-vaulted ceiling and walls hung with 15th-century Arras tapestries. The palace now houses a museum of statuary and tapestries from the cathedral, including a 15th-century tapestry of the baptism of Clovis, the first Christian king.

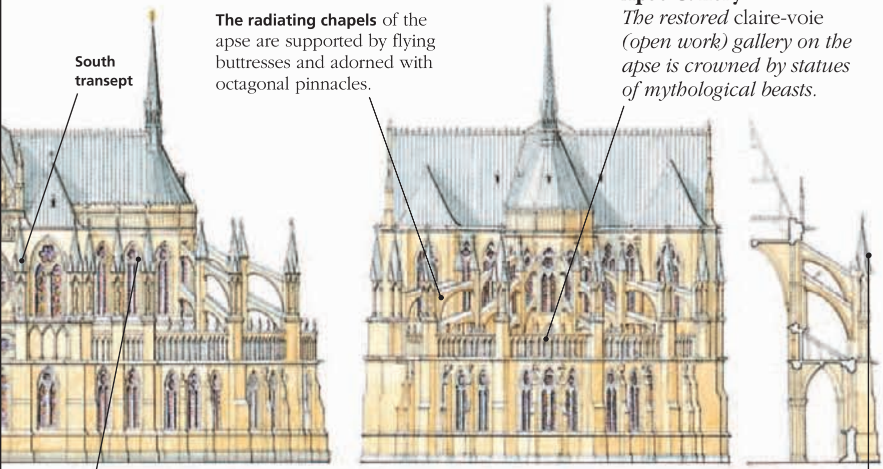
Salle du Tau – the banqueting hall

VISITORS' CHECKLIST

Cathédrale Notre-Dame, pl du Cardinal Luçon. ***Tel*** *03 26 47 55 34. ○ 7:30am–7:30pm daily. ✝ 8am & 7pm Mon–Fri; 8am Sat; 9:30am & 11am Sun. 📷 ♿ ✍ by appt only.*
www.cathedrale-reims.com
Palais du Tau ***Tel*** *03 26 47 81 79. ○ Tue–Sun. ● Jan 1, May 1, Nov 1 & 11, Dec 25.* ✍



Apse Gallery
The restored claire-voie *(open work) gallery on the apse is crowned by statues of mythological beasts.*



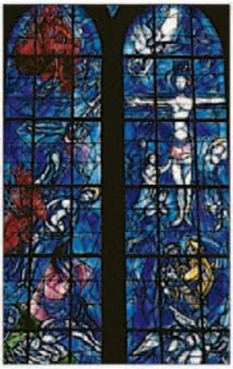
South transept

The radiating chapels of the apse are supported by flying buttresses and adorned with octagonal pinnacles.

APSE

The clerestory windows pioneered Gothic tracery by dividing the lights with slender bars of stone, creating a decorative, intersecting pattern.

Pinnacles on the flying buttresses shelter guardian angels, symbolic protectors of the cathedral.



Chagall Window
The windows in the axial chapel were designed by the 20th-century artist Marc Chagall and made by local craftsmen. This one depicts the Crucifixion and the Sacrifice of Isaac.

STAR FEATURES

- ★ Gallery of the Kings
- ★ Smiling Angel
- ★ Great Rose Window

The *sentier touristique*, a walk along the ramparts of Rocroi

Vallée de la Meuse ❸

Ardennes. 👥 *8,900.* 🚆 *Revin.*
ℹ *2 rue Victor Hugo, Revin (03 24 40 19 59).* **www**.meuselavallee.org

The Meuse meanders through the Ardennes among spectacular scenery of wild gorges, woods, and warped rock formations of granite or schist.

Dramatically situated on a double meander of the Meuse, **Revin** is an unremarkable town in an exceptional site, with the Vieille Ville enfolded in the north bend. From the quay, you can see wooded **Mont Malgré Tout** and a route dotted with observation points and steep trails. Just south is **Dames de la Meuse**, a rocky outcrop over the river gorge.

Monthermé lies on two banks, with the Vieille Ville clustered on the charming left bank. The rocky gorges around **Roche à Sept Heures** on the far bank entice climbers and ramblers. The jagged crest of **Rocher des Quatre Fils d'Aymon** suggests the silhouette of four legendary local horsemen.

Rocroi ❹

Ardennes. 👥 *2,600.* 🚌 🚆 *Revin*
ℹ *14 pl d'Armes (03 24 54 20 06).*
⊖ *Tue & 1st Mon of month.*
www.otrocroi.com

Set on the Ardennes plateau, the unique star-shaped citadel of Rocroi was originally built under Henri II in 1555, and later made impregnable by Vauban in 1675 *(see p226)*. The main attraction is the walk along the ramparts from the southern gateway. The nature preserve at Rièzes is home to orchids and carnivorous plants.

Charleville-Mézières ❺

Ardennes. 👥 *58,000.* 🚆 🚌
ℹ *4 pl Ducale (03 24 55 69 90).*
⊖ *Tue, Thu, & Sat.*
www.charleville-tourisme.com

This riverside ford was originally two towns. The somber medieval citadel of Mézières only merged with the neat Classical town of Charleville in 1966. Mézières has irregular slate-covered houses curving around a bend in the Meuse. Battered fortifications and gateways are visible from avenue de St-Julien. Tucked into the ramparts is the much remodeled Gothic **Notre-Dame de l'Espérance**.

The centrepiece of Charleville is **place Ducale**, a model of Louis XIII urban planning, echoing place des Vosges in Paris *(see p91)*. The poet Arthur Rimbaud was born nearby in 1854. His modest birthplace at No. 12 rue Bérégovoy is still there, along with his childhood home on the Meuse at 7 quai Arthur Rimbaud.

Just along the quayside is the Vieux Moulin, the town house whose view inspired *Le Bateau Ivre*, Rimbaud's greatest poem. Inside is the small **Musée Rimbaud**, with manuscripts and photographs by the poet.

🏛 **Musée Rimbaud**
Quai Arthur Rimbaud. ***Tel*** *03 24 32 44 65.* ○ *Tue–Sun.* ● *Jan 1, May 1, Dec 25.* 🎟 *(free first Sun of month).*

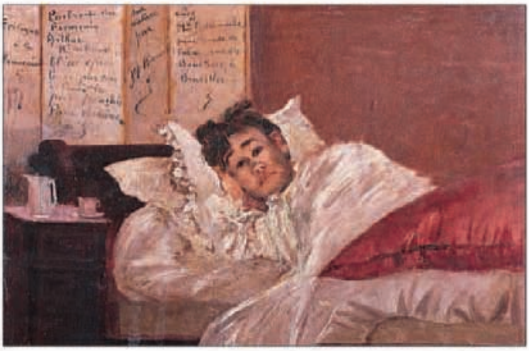
Sedan ❻

Ardennes. 👥 *23,000.* 🚆 🚌
ℹ *Château Fort, pl du Château (03 24 27 73 73).* ⊖ *Wed & Sat.*

Just to the east of Charleville is the **Château de Sedan**, the largest fortified castle in the whole of Europe. There has been a bastion on these slopes since the 11th century, but each Ardennes conflict has spelled a new tier of defenses for Sedan.

In 1870, during the Franco-Prussian War, with 700 Prussian cannons turned on Sedan, Napoleon III surrendered and 83,000 French prisoners were deported to Prussia. In May 1940 after capturing Sedan, German forces reached the French coast a week later.

The seven-storeyed bastion contains sections dating from medieval times to the 16th



The 19th-century poet Rimbaud, whose birthplace was Charleville century. Highlights of any visit are the ramparts, the 16th-century fortifications, and the magnificent 15th-century eaves in one tower. The **Musée du Château**, in the south wing, is rather jumbled, with a section on military campaigns.

The bastion is surrounded by 17th-century slate-roofed houses which hug the banks of the Meuse. These reflect the city's earlier prosperity as a Huguenot stronghold.

🏛 Musée du Château
1 pl du Château. ***Tel*** *03 24 27 73 73.*
○ *mid-Mar–mid-Sep: daily; mid-Sep–mid-Mar: w/e* ✋ *Tue–Fri pms.*

Environs

Farther south is **Fort de Villy-la-Ferté**, one of the few forts on the Maginot line to have been captured in devastating combat with the enemy in 1940.

Courtyard inside the heavily fortified Château de Sedan

Gargoyle on Basilique de Notre-Dame de l'Epine

Argonne ⑦

Ardennes & Meuse. 🚆 *Châlons.* 🚌 *Ste-Menehould.* ℹ *5 pl du Général Leclerc, Ste-Menehould (03 26 60 85 83).* **www**.argonne.fr

East of Reims, the Argonne is a compact region of picturesque valleys and forests, dotted with priories, trenches, and war cemeteries.

As a wooded border between the rival bishoprics of Champagne and Lorraine, the Argonne was home to abbeys and priories. Now ruined, the Benedictine abbey of **Beaulieu-en-Argonne** boasts a 13th-century wine press and has forest views.

Just north is **Les Islettes**, known for its faïence pottery and tiles. The hilly terrain here was a battleground during the Franco-Prussian War and World War I. The disputed territory of **Butte de Vauquois**, north of Les Islettes, bears a war memorial.

L'Épine ⑧

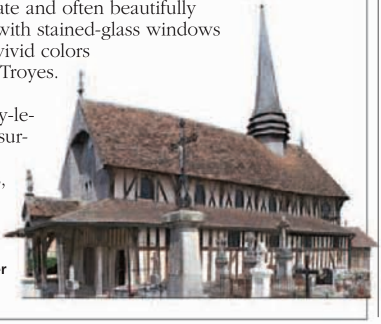
Marne. 👥 *600.* 🚆 *Châlons.* 🚌 ℹ *Mairie (03 26 66 96 99).*

L'Épine is worth visiting if only for a glimpse of the **Basilique de Notre-Dame de l'Épine** surrounded by wheatfields. Designed on the scale of a cathedral, this 15th-century Flamboyant Gothic church has been a pilgrimage site since medieval times. Even French kings have come here to venerate a "miraculous" statue of the Virgin.

On the façade, three gabled portals are offset by floating tracery, a gauzy effect reminiscent of Reims cathedral. All around are gruesome gargoyles, symbolizing evil spirits and deadly sins, chased out by the holy presence within. Unfortunately, the most risqué sculptures were destroyed, judged obscene by 19th-century puritans. The subdued Gothic interior contains a 15th-century rood-screen and the venerated statue of the Virgin.

CHAMPAGNE TIMBER CHURCHES

Skirting Lac du Der-Chantecoq lies a region of woodland and water meadows, containing twelve Romanesque and Renaissance half-timbered churches with curious pointed gables and *caquetoirs*, rickety wooden porches. They have intimate and often beautifully carved interiors with stained-glass windows designed in the vivid colors of the School of Troyes. Rural roads link churches at Bailly-le-Franc, Chatillon-sur-Broué, Lentilles, Vignory, Outines, Chavanges, and Montier-en-Der.



16th-century timber church in Lentilles

Châlons-en-Champagne ❾

Marne. 👥 *48,000.* 🚆 🚌 ℹ
3 quai des Arts (03 26 65 17 89).
🛒 *Wed, Fri am, Sat, Sun am.*
www.chalons-tourisme.com

Encircled by the river Marne and minor canals, Châlons' sleepy bourgeois charm is made up of half-timbered houses and gardens mirrored in canals. Nearby are vineyards producing Blanc de Blancs.

From quai de Notre-Dame there are views of old bridges and the Romanesque towers of **Notre-Dame-en-Vaux**, a masterpiece of Romanesque-Gothic. Behind the church is a well-restored medieval quarter and the **Musée du Cloître**, containing the original Romanesque cloisters.

Cathédrale St-Etienne, by the canal, is a cool Gothic affair with a Baroque portal, Romanesque crypt and vivid medieval windows. Beyond is **Le Petit Jard**, riverside gardens overlooking the Château du Marché, and a turreted toll gate built by Henri IV. Excellent river tours of the city are available from the tourist office.

🏛 Musée du Cloître de Notre-Dame-en-Vaux

Rue Nicolas Durand. ***Tel** 03 26 69 38 53.* ○ *Wed–Mon.* ● *Jan 1, May 1, Nov 1 & 11, Dec 25.* 💰 👉

Statuary in Troyes' Cathédrale St-Pierre-et-St-Paul

Troyes ❿

Aube. 👥 *62,000.* 🚆 🚌 ℹ *16 bd Carnot (03 25 82 62 70).* 🛒 *daily.*
www.tourisme-troyes.com

Troyes is a delight, a city of magnificent Gothic churches and charming 16th-century courtyards, in a historical center shaped like a champagne cork. The city is famous for its heritage of stained glass and sausages *(andouillettes)*, its knitwear industry, and factory stores.

The battered Flamboyant Gothic west front of the **Cathédrale St-Pierre-et-St-Paul** opens onto a splendid vaulted interior. The nave is bathed in mauvish-red rays from the 16th-century rose window, complemented by the discreet turquoise of the Tree of Jesse window and the intense blue of the medieval windows of the apse.

Nearby, **Eglise St-Nizier** glitters in the faded quarter behind the cathedral with its shimmering tiled Burgundian roof. Inside, it is lit by windows in a range of warm mauves and soothing blues.

The Gothic **Basilique St-Urbain** boasts grand flying buttresses and particularly fine windows which have recently been restored. **Eglise Ste-Madeleine** is noted for its elaborate 16th-century rood screen resembling lacey foliage, grapes and figs. Beyond is a wall of windows in browns, reds, and blues. The ruelle des Chats, which is a quaint covered passageway, connects rue Charbonnet and rue Champeaux.

Rue Larivey, a typical street with half-timbered houses, in Troyes

Set in one of the best-preserved quarters, **Eglise St-Pantaléon** faces a Renaissance mansion. A Gothic and Renaissance interior houses an imposing collection of 16th-century statuary and severe *grisaille* windows.

🏛 Musée d'Art Moderne

14 pl St-Pierre. ***Tel** 03 25 76 26 80.*
○ *Tue–Sun.* ● *public hols.* 💰 ♿
Beside the cathedral, the former episcopal palace is now a museum of modern art, with a sculpture by Rodin, and an especially fine collection of Fauvist paintings, as well as other modern art.

🏛 Hôtel du Petit Louvre

Rue de la Montée St-Pierre.
Courtyard only ○ *daily.*
Set off quai Dampierre, this well-restored *hôtel particulier* boasts a fish-scale roof, medieval tower, Renaissance courtyard, staircase, and well. The highlight is a façade adorned with quizzical multicolored faces.

Environs

The city's green playground, **Lac et Forêt d'Orient**, is 15 miles (25 km) east of Troyes. The forest is dotted with marshes, nature preserves, and smaller lakes. Lac d'Orient, the largest artificial lake in Europe, is popular for sailing, with water-skiing on Lac Amance, and fishing at Lac du Temple.

Chaumont ⑪

Haute-Marne. 👥 *26,000.* 🚆 ℹ *pl du Général de Gaulle (03 25 03 80 80).* ⛺ *Wed & Sat.* **www**.ville-chaumont.fr

As the former residence of the Counts of Champagne, this feudal town enjoyed great prestige in the 13th century. On the far side of a ravine, the old town is on a rocky spur, with the Palais de Justice and the medieval castle keep dominating.

The keep is a reminder that this quiet administrative center had a formidable past. This impression is confirmed by the Renaissance town houses which are bulging with *tourelles d'escaliers*, turreted staircases.

Basilique St-Jean-Baptiste, a gray-stone Champenois church, is the most remarkable monument in Chaumont. The interior is enlivened by a spider's web of vaulting, a striking turreted staircase and Renaissance galleries. Near the entrance is a tiny chapel containing an unsettling *Mise au Tombeau* (1471), an intense multicolored stone group of 10 mourners gathered around Christ laid out on a shroud in his tomb. In the left transept is a bizarre but beguiling *Tree of Jesse*. On this ill-lit Renaissance stone relief, a family tree sprouts from the sleeping Jesus.

Environs

Fourteen miles (23 km) to the northwest of Chaumont, **Colombey-les-Deux-Eglises** will forever be associated with General Charles de Gaulle (1890–1970). The de Gaulles bought their home, **La Boisserie,** in 1933, but had to abandon it during the war, when it was badly damaged. After its restoration, de Gaulle would return to La Boisserie from Paris at weekends to write his memoirs and plan his come-back. He died here on November 9, 1970. The house is now a museum.

In the village churchyard, the General and President of France (1958–69) lies in a simple tomb. However, a giant granite cross of Lorraine, erected in 1972, dominates the skyline. At its foot, the **Mémorial** is a new museum dedicated to De Gaulle's life.

Cathédrale St-Mammès in Langres

🏛 **La Boisserie**
Colombey-les-Deux-Eglises.
Tel *03 25 01 52 52.* ○ *Feb–Nov: Wed–Mon.* 🎧 ♿

🏛 **Mémorial Charles de Gaulle**
Tel *03 25 01 52 52.* ○ *Feb–Nov: Wed–Mon (Apr–Oct: daily).* 🎧

Langres ⑫

Haute-Marne. 👥 *10,000.* 🚆 🚌 ℹ *square Olivier Lahalle (03 25 87 67 67).* ⛺ *Fri.*
www.tourisme-langres.com

Set on a rocky spur, Langres lies beyond Chaumont, in the backwaters of southern Champagne. This ancient bishopric was one of the gateways to Burgundy and the birthplace of the encyclopedist, Denis Diderot (1713–84). Langres promotes itself as a land of springs, claiming that its proximity to the sources of the Seine and Marne grant it mystical powers.

Virtually the whole town is enclosed by medieval ramparts, Langres' undoubted attraction. A succession of towers and parapets provide glimpses of romantic town gates and sculpted Renaissance mansions, with panoramic views of the Marne valley, the Langres plateau, the Vosges, and, on a clear day, even Mont Blanc.

Near Porte Henri IV is the much-remodeled **Cathédrale St-Mammès**. The gloomy vaulted interior, in Burgundian Romanesque style, is redeemed by the sculpted capitals in the apse, reputedly taken from a temple of Jupiter. The town's Musée d'Art et d'Histoire has some interesting collections.

Langres' lively summer season includes historical re-enactments, theater, and fireworks.

Memorial to General de Gaulle at Colombey-les-Deux-Eglises

ALSACE AND LORRAINE

MEURTHE-ET-MOSELLE · MEUSE · MOSELLE · BAS-RHIN
HAUT-RHIN · VOSGES

As border regions, Alsace and Lorraine have been fought over for centuries by France, Austria, and Germany, their beleaguered past recalled by many a military stronghold and cemetery. Today, the region presents only a peaceful aspect with pastel-painted villages, fortified towns, and sleepy vineyards.

At the northeast frontier of France, bordered by the Rhine, Alsace forms a fertile watershed between the mountains of the Vosges and the Black Forest in Germany. Lorraine, with its rolling landscape on the other side of the mountains, is the poorer cousin but is more overtly French in character.

EMBATTLED TERRITORY

Caught in the wars between France and Germany, Alsace and part of Lorraine have changed nationality four times since 1871. Centuries of strife have made border citadels of Metz, Toul, and Verdun in Lorraine, while Alsace abounds with castles, from the faithfully reconstructed Haut-Koenigsbourg to Saverne's ruined fortress, built to guard a strategic pass in the Vosges. However, the area has a strong identity of its own, taking pride in local costumes, traditions, and dialects. In Alsace, Route des Vins vineyards nudge pretty villages in the Vosges foothills. Strasbourg, the capital, is a cosmopolitan city with a 16th-century center, while Nancy, Lorraine's historical capital, represents elegant 18th-century architecture.

Much of the attraction of this region lies in its cuisine. Lorraine offers beer and quiche lorraine. In Alsace, cozy *winstubs*, or wine cellars, serve sauerkraut and flowery white wines, such as Riesling and Gewürztraminer. There are also fine restaurants here.

Villagers enjoying the view from their window in Hunspach, north of Strasbourg in the northern Vosges

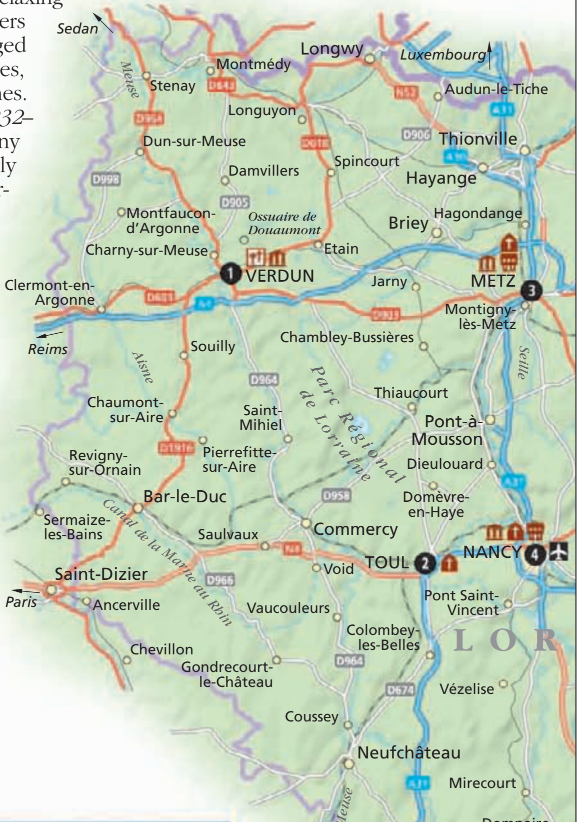
◁ **Half-timbered houses with flower-clad balconies along the Route du Vin in Alsace**

Exploring Alsace and Lorraine

Visitors seeking art and architecture will be amply rewarded by the charming medieval towns and excellent city museums of the region. Undiscovered Lorraine is the place to clamber over military citadels, walk in unspoiled countryside, and unwind at relaxing spas. By contrast, Alsace offers magnificent forests and rugged mountain drives in the Vosges, quaint villages, and rich wines. The Route des Vins *(see pp232–3)* is one of the region's many scenic routes. It is particularly popular during the wine harvest festivities but is worth visiting in any season.

SIGHTS AT A GLANCE

Betschdorf ⓲
Château du Haut-Koenigsbourg ⓭
Colmar ❿
Eguisheim ❾
Gérardmer ❺
Guebwiller ❼
Metz ❸
Mulhouse ❻
Nancy ❹
Neuf-Brisach ❽
Obernai ⓯
Ribeauvillé ⓬
Riquewihr ⓫
Saverne ⓱
Sélestat ⓮
Strasbourg ⓰
Toul ❷
Verdun ❶

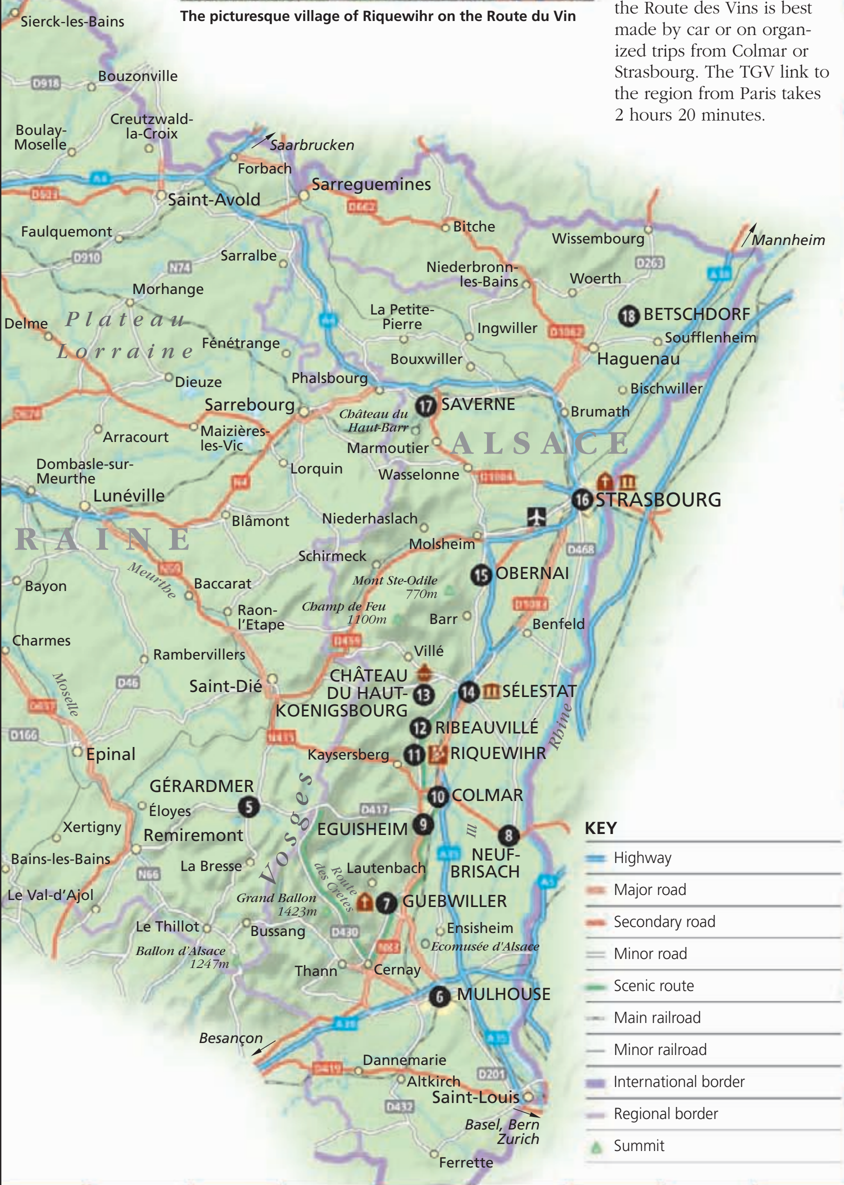

Sedan
Meuse
Stenay
Montmédy
Longwy
Luxembourg
Audun-le-Tiche
D643
N52
A31
Longuyon
D964
Dun-sur-Meuse
D618
D906
Thionville
Spincourt
Hayange
D998
Damvillers
A30
D905
Montfaucon-d'Argonne
Ossuaire de Douaumont
Briey
Hagondange
Charny-sur-Meuse
Etain
1 VERDUN
Jarny
METZ 3
Clermont-en-Argonne
D603
A4
D903
Montigny-lès-Metz
Reims
Souilly
Chambley-Bussières
Seille
Aisne
D964
Parc Régional de Lorraine
Thiaucourt
Chaumont-sur-Aire
Saint-Mihiel
Pont-à-Mousson
Revigny-sur-Ornain
D1916
Pierrefitte-sur-Aire
Dieulouard
Bar-le-Duc
D958
Domèvre-en-Haye
A31
Sermaize-les-Bains
Canal de la Marne au Rhin
Saulvaux
Commercy
N4
NANCY 4
Void
TOUL 2
Saint-Dizier
D966
Paris
Anceville
Vaucouleurs
Pont Saint-Vincent
Colombey-les-Belles
LOR
Chevillon
Gondrecourt-le-Château
D964
D674
Vézelise
Coussey
Neufchâteau
Mirecourt
A31
Meuse
Dompaire
Contrexéville
Vittel
Dijon
D164
0 kilometers 20
0 miles 10

Field of sunflowers just outside the village of Turckheim

The picturesque village of Riquewihr on the Route du Vin

GETTING AROUND

There are good road and rail links between Strasbourg, Colmar, and Nancy, and on to Switzerland and Germany. The main roads to and through the regions are the N4, A31, and A35, the A4 to Paris, and the N59 and the tunnel under the Vosges. The spectacular journey over the Vosges and along the Route des Vins is best made by car or on organized trips from Colmar or Strasbourg. The TGV link to the region from Paris takes 2 hours 20 minutes.


Sierck-les-Bains
Bouzonville
D918
Boulay-Moselle
Creutzwald-la-Croix
Saarbrucken
Forbach
A4
D603
Saint-Avold
Sarreguemines
D662
Faulquemont
Bitche
Wissembourg
Mannheim
D910
N74
Sarralbe
Niederbronn-les-Bains
Woerth
D263
A35
Morhange
La Petite-Pierre
18 BETSCHDORF
Delme
Plateau Lorraine
Fénétrange
A4
Ingwiller
D1062
Soufflenheim
Haguenau
Bouxwiller
Dieuze
Phalsbourg
Bischwiller
Sarrebourg
17 SAVERNE
Brumath
D674
Arracourt
Maizières-les-Vic
Château du Haut-Barr
Marmoutier
ALSACE
Dombasle-sur-Meurthe
Lorquin
N4
Wasselonne
D1004
Lunéville
16 STRASBOURG
Blâmont
Niederhaslach
LORRAINE
D468
Molsheim
Schirmeck
Meurthe
D59
15 OBERNAI
Bayon
Baccarat
Mont Ste-Odile 770m
Raon-l'Etape
Champ de Feu 1100m
D1083
Barr
Benfeld
Charmes
D424
Villé
Rambervillers
Moselle
D46
Saint-Dié
CHÂTEAU DU HAUT-KOENIGSBOURG 13
14 SÉLESTAT
D157
D166
N415
12 RIBEAUVILLÉ
Rhine
Epinal
Kaysersberg
11 RIQUEWIHR
GÉRARDMER
Vosges
D417
10 COLMAR
5
Éloyes
Xertigny
9 EGUISHEIM
Ill
8
Remiremont
A35
NEUF-BRISACH
Bains-les-Bains
N66
La Bresse
Lautenbach
A5
Route des Crêtes
Le Val-d'Ajol
Grand Ballon 1423m
7 GUEBWILLER
Le Thillot
Bussang
D430
Ensisheim
Ballon d'Alsace 1247m
N83
Ecomusée d'Alsace
Thann
Cernay
6 MULHOUSE
A36
Besançon
A35
Dannemarie
D419
D201
Altkirch
Saint-Louis
D432
Basel, Bern Zurich
Ferrette
KEY
Highway
Major road
Secondary road
Minor road
Scenic route
Main railroad
Minor railroad
International border
Regional border
Summit

The Ossuaire de Douaumont, a sentinel for the regiments of crosses on the battlefields of Verdun

Verdun ❶

Meuse. 👥 *21,000.* 🚆 🚌 ℹ *pl de la Nation (03 29 86 14 18).* ⊜ *Fri.* **www**.verdun-tourisme.com

Verdun will be forever remembered for the horrors of the 1916–1917 Battle of Verdun, when about a million men died in almost a whole year of continuous bloodshed that is considered the worst single battle of the Great War. The Germans intended to strike a blow at French morale by destroying the forts of Douaumont and Vaux (which had been built to prevent a repeat of the humiliating French defeat of the Franco-Prussian war of 1870) and capture Verdun, France's northeastern stronghold. The French fought simply to prevent the town being taken. The stalemate and the killing continued here right up to the end of the war, and not until 1918 did the Germans draw back from their positions just 3 miles from the town.

Several poignant museums, memorials, battle sites, and cemeteries can be visited in the hills just outside Verdun on the north side. In this devastated region, nine villages were obliterated without trace. The **Musée-Memorial de Fleury** tells their story. Nearby, the **Ossuaire de Douaumont** contains the unidentified bones of over 130,000 French and German dead. One of the most striking monuments to the Battle of Verdun is Rodin's memorial in Verdun itself. It depicts the winged figure of Victory unable to soar triumphant because she has become caught in the remains of a dead soldier.

The town of Verdun was heavily fortified over the centuries. The crenelated **Porte Chaussée**, a medieval river gateway, still guards the eastern entrance to the town and is the most impressive of the remaining fortifications.

Although battered by war damage, the **Citadelle de Verdun** retains its 12th-century tower, the only relic from the original abbey that Vauban incorporated into his new military design. Now a war museum, the **Citadelle Souterraine** recreates Verdun's role in WWI. The citadel casemates come to life as grim trenches, and the presentation ends by showing how the "Unknown Soldier" was chosen for the symbolic tomb under the Arc de Triomphe in Paris *(see p107).*

The town center is dominated by the cathedral, where Romanesque elements were rediscovered after the 1916 bombardments.

The 16th-century cloisters of Eglise St-Gengoult in Toul

🏛 Citadelle Souterraine

Ave du 5ième R.A.P. ***Tel*** *03 29 86 14 18.* ○ *daily.* ● *Jan.* 🎧 ♿

Toul ❷

Meurthe-et-Moselle. 👥 *17,000.* 🚆 🚌 ℹ *parvis de la Cathédrale (03 83 64 11 69).* ⊜ *Wed & Fri.* **www**.ot-toul.fr

Lying within dark forests west of Nancy, the octagonal fortress city of Toul is encircled by the Moselle and the Canal de la Marne. Along with Verdun and Metz, Toul was one of the 4th-century bishoprics. In the early 18th century, Vauban built the citadel, from which the ring of defensive waterways, the octagonal city ramparts, and the **Porte de Metz** remain.

The **Cathédrale St-Etienne**, begun in the 13th century, took over 300 years to build. It suffered damage in World War II but the purity of the Champenois style has survived, notably in the arched, high-galleried interior. The imposing Flamboyant Gothic façade is flanked by octagonal towers. Rue du Général-Gengoult, behind the Gothic **Eglise St-Gengoult**, contains a clutch of sculpted Renaissance houses. North of the city the local "gray" Côtes de Toul wines are produced.

Environs

South of Toul, near the town of Neufchâteau, is the birthplace of Joan of Arc at **Domrémy-La-Pucelle**. Next door to the house where she was born is an exhibition about her remarkable life.

The vast **Parc Régional de Lorraine** takes in red-tiled cottages, vineyards, forests, cropland, *chaumes* (high pastureland), marshes, and lakes. Inns in the area are especially noted for their quiche lorraine and *potée lorraine*, a bacon casserole.

Jupiter Slaying a Monster **on the Column of Merten in La Cour d'Or**

Metz ③

Moselle. 👥 *130,000.* ✈ 🚆 🚌
ℹ *pl d'Armes (03 87 55 53 76).*
🛒 *Sat.* **www**.mairie-metz.fr

An austere yet appealing city, Metz sits at the confluence of the Moselle and the Seille. Twenty bridges criss-cross the rivers and canals, and there are pleasant walks along the banks. This Gallo-Roman city, now the capital of Lorraine, has always been a pawn in the game of border chess – annexed by Germany in 1871, regained by France in 1918.

Set on a hill above the Moselle, the **Cathédrale St-Etienne** overlooks the historic center. Inside there are stained-glass windows, including some by Chagall.

To the northwest of the cathedral, a narrow wooden bridge leads across to the island of Petit Saulcy, site of the oldest French theater still in use. Located on the other side of the cathedral, the **Porte des Allemands**, spanning a river, more resembles a medieval castle because of its bridge, defensive towers, and 13th-century gate with pepper-pot towers.

In the Vieille Ville, place St-Louis is a delightful square bordered by lofty, arcaded 14th-century mansions. **Eglise St-Pierre-aux-Nonnains** claims to be one of the oldest churches in France. The external walls and the façade date from Roman times, while much of the rest belongs to the 7th-century convent that occupied the site. Nearby is the frescoed 13th-century **Chapelle des Templiers**, built by the Knights Templar.

Opened in Metz in 2010, the **Centre Pompidou-Metz** is an annex to the Pompidou Center in Paris *(see pp92–3)*. The museum is a showcase for modern European art.

🏛 Musée de la Cour d'Or

2 rue du Haut-Poirier. ***Tel*** *03 87 68 25 00.* ○ *Wed–Mon.* ● *publ hols.* ♿

Also known as the Musée d'Art et d'Histoire, this fascinating collection is set in the Petits-Carmes, a deconsecrated 17th-century monastery incorporating Gallo-Roman thermal baths and a medieval tithe barn. On display are Merovingian stone carvings, Gothic painted ceilings, and a variety of German, Flemish, and French paintings.

WHITE STORKS

Until recently, the white stork, traditionally a symbol of good fortune, was a frequent sight in northeast France. White storks spend the winter in Africa, but migrate north to breed. However, the gradual draining of marshy ground, pesticides, and electric cables have threatened their survival here. A program to reintroduce them to the area has set up breeding centers, as at Molsheim and Turckheim, which means these striking birds can once again be seen in Alsace-Lorraine.

The 13th-century Chapelle des Templiers with restored frescoes in Metz

Place Stanislas in Nancy with the statue of Stanislas Leczinski, Duke of Lorraine and father-in-law of Louis XV

Nancy ④

Meurthe-et-Moselle. 👥 *105,000.*
✈ 🚆 🚌 ℹ *14 pl Stanislas (03 83 35 22 41).* ⊖ *Tue–Sat.*
www.ot-nancy.fr

Lorraine's historic capital backs onto the Canal du Marne and the river Meurthe. In the 18th century, Stanislas Leczinski, Duke of Lorraine *(see p302)*, transformed the city, making it a model of 18th-century urban planning.

Nancy's second golden age was the turn of this century, when glassmaker Emile Gallé founded the Ecole de Nancy, a forerunner of the Art Nouveau movement in France.

Nancy's principal and most renowned landmark is **place Stanislas**. Laid out in the 1750s, this elegantly proportioned square is enclosed by highly ornate gilded wrought-iron gates and railings, beautifully restored in 2005. Lining the square are fine *hôtels particuliers* (town houses) and chic restaurants.

An Arc de Triomphe leads to Place de la Carrière, a gracious, tree-lined square. At the far end, flanked by semicircular arcades, is the Gothic **Palais du Gouvernement**. Next door in the Parc de la Pépinière is Rodin's statue of Claude Lorrain, the landscape painter, born near Nancy.

The Grande Rue provides a glimpse of medieval Nancy. Of the original fortifications only the Porte de la Craffe remains, which was used as a prison after the Revolution.

✝ Eglise et Couvent des Cordeliers et Musée Régional des Arts et Traditions Populaires

64 & 66 grande rue. ***Tel*** *03 83 32 18 74.* ○ *Wed–Mon.* ● *Jan 1, Easter, May 1, Jul 14, Nov 1, Dec 25.* 🎫

The Dukes of Lorraine are buried in the crypt and the adjoining converted monastery contains the Musée Régional des Arts et Traditions Populaires, covering folklore, furniture, costumes, and crafts.

🏛 Musée des Beaux Arts

3 pl Stanislas. ***Tel*** *03 83 85 30 72.* ○ *Wed–Mon.* ● *some public hols.* 🎫 ♿ ✋

Recent renovation and a modern extension have enabled 40 percent more of the museum's remarkable collection of 14th- to 20th-century European art to be seen, including works by Delacroix, Manet, Monet, Utrillo and Modigliani. The Daum glassware is stunning.

🏛 Musée Historique Lorraine

Palais Ducal, 64 grande rue. ***Tel*** *03 83 32 18 74.* ○ *Tue–Sun.* ● *Jan 1, May 1, Jul 14, Nov 1, Dec 25.* 🎫

The Museum of the History of Lorraine has a rich collection of archeological finds, sculptures, and paintings, including two by Georges de la Tour.

🏛 Musée de l'Ecole de Nancy

36–38 rue de Sergent Blandan. ***Tel*** *03 83 40 14 86.* ○ *Wed–Sun.* ● *Jan 1, May 1, July 14, Nov 1, Dec 25.* 🎫 ✋

Exhibits in reconstructed Art Nouveau settings include furniture, fabrics, and jewelry, as well as the fanciful glassware of Emile Gallé, founder of the Ecole de Nancy.

Arc de Triomphe in place Stanislas, leading to place de la Carrière

Vosges landscape seen from the Route des Crêtes

THE ROUTE DES CRÊTES

This strategic mountain road, 50 miles (83 km) long, connects the Vosges valleys from Col du Bonhomme to Cernay, east of Thann, often through woodland. Hugging the western side of the Vosges, the Route des Crêtes was created during World War I to prevent the Germans from observing French troop movements. When not shrouded in mist, there are breathtaking views over Lorraine from its many "ridges" *(crêtes).*

Gérardmer ❺

Vosges. 👥 *10,000.* 🚆 🚌 **i** *4 pl des Déportés (03 29 27 27 27).* *Thu & Sat.* **www**.gerardmer.net

Nestling on the Lorraine side of the Vosges, on the shore of a magnificent lake stretching out before it, Gérardmer is a setting rather than a city. In November 1944, just before its liberation, Gérardmer was razed by the Nazi scorched-earth policy, but has since been reconstructed. Saw mills and woodcarving remain local trades, though tourism is fast replacing the textile industry.

Gérardmer is now a popular vacation resort. In winter, the steep slopes of the Vosges Cristallines around the town turn it into a ski resort, while the lake is used for watersports in summer. The town's attractions also include lakeside walks and boat trips, as well as Géromée cheese, similar to the more famous Munster from just over the Alsatian border. Gérardmer also boasts the oldest tourist information office in the country, dating from 1875.

The scenic drives and mountain hikes in the Vosges attract adventurous visitors. Most leave the lakeside bowl to head for the Alsatian border via the magnificent **Route des Crêtes**, which can be joined at the mountain pass of Col de la Schlucht.

The lake at Gérardmer, offering sporting and leisure activities

Recreating village crafts in Ecomusée d'Alsace in Ungersheim

Mulhouse ❻

Haut Rhin. 👥 *125,000.* ✈ 🚆 🚌 **i** *9 av du Maréchal Foch (03 89 35 48 48).* *Tue, Thu & Sat.* **www**.tourisme-mulhouse.com

Close to the Swiss border, Mulhouse is an industrial city, badly damaged in World War II. However, there are technical museums and shopping galleries, as well as Alsatian taverns and Swiss wine bars. Most visitors use the city as a base for exploring the rolling hills of the Sundgau on the Swiss border.

Of the museums, **Musée de l'Impression sur Etoffes**, at 14 rue Jean-Jaques Henner, is devoted to textiles and fabric painting, while **Musée Français du Chemin de Fer**, at 2 rue Alfred Glehn, has a collection of steam and electric locomotives. A revamped **Musée National de l'Automobile**, at 192 avenue de Colmar, boasts over 100 Bugattis, a clutch of Mercedes and Ferraris, and Charlie Chaplin's Rolls Royce. In Place de la République is the **Musée Historique**, in the Renaissance former town hall.

Alsatian black pig in Ecomusée d'Alsace in Ungersheim

Environs

At Ungersheim, north of Mulhouse, the **Ecomusée d'Alsace** consists of rural settings transplanted here to preserve and display the region's heritage. The 12th-century fortified house from Mulhouse is a dramatic building, complete with Gothic garden. Farms are run along traditional lines, with livestock such as the Alsatian black pig. Rural crafts can be seen in their original settings.

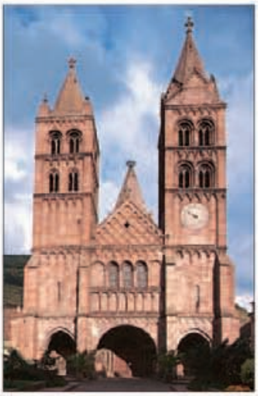
🏛 Ecomusée d'Alsace
Chemin du Grosswald. ***Tel*** *03 89 62 43 00.* ○ *Apr–Dec: daily.* ♿

Guebwiller ❼

Haut Rhin. 👥 *11,800.* 🚌 ℹ *73 rue de la République (03 89 76 10 63).* 🛒 *Tue & Fri.* **www**.florival.net

Surrounded by vineyards and flower-filled valleys, Guebwiller is known as “the gate-way to the valley of flowers.” However, as an industrial town producing textiles and machine tools, it feels cut off from this rural setting. The houses are dignified, but the *caves* and churches make it worth a visit.

Set on a pretty square, **Eglise Notre-Dame** combines Baroque theatricality with Neoclassical elegance, while **Eglise des Dominicains** boasts Gothic frescoes and a fine rood screen. **Eglise St-Léger**, the richly ornamented Romanesque church, is the most rewarding, especially the façade, triple porch, and portal.



Eglise St-Léger in Guebwiller

Environs

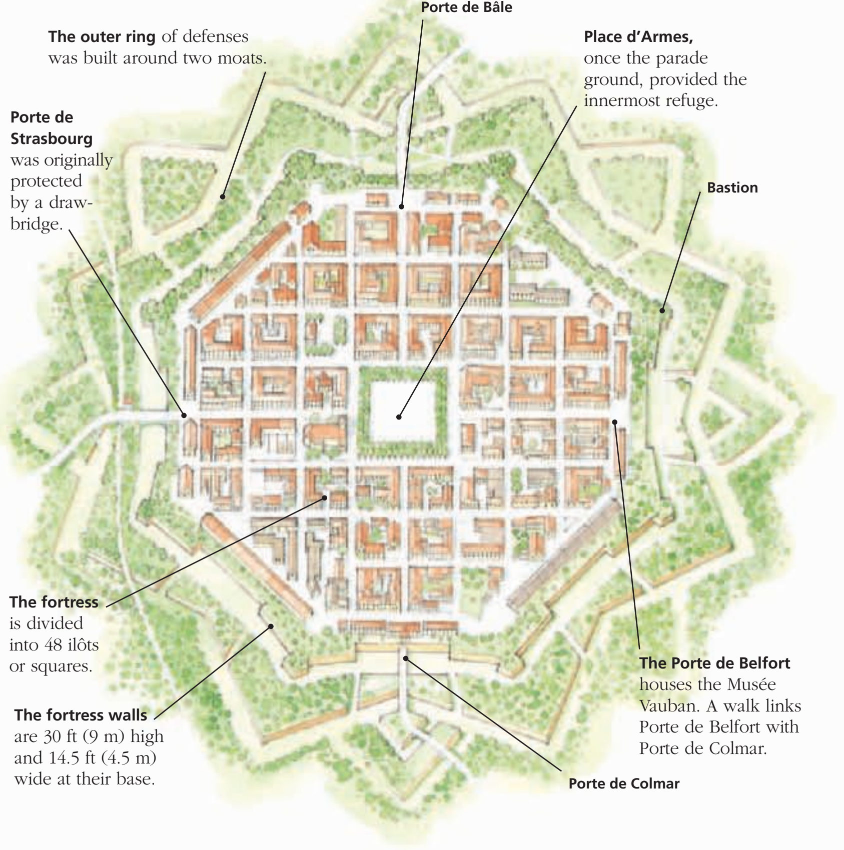
The scenic Lauch valley, north-west of Guebwiller, is known as “Le Florival” because of its floral aspect. **Lautenbach** is used as a starting point for hikes through this recognized *zone de tranquillité.* The village has a pink Roman-esque church, whose portal depicts human passion and the battle between Good and Evil. The square leads to the river, a small weir, *lavoir* (public washing place), and houses overhanging the water.

Neuf-Brisach ❽

Haut Rhin. 👥 *2,100.* 🚌 ℹ *Palais du Gouverneur, 6 pl d’Armes (03 89 72 56 66).* 🛒 *1st & 3rd Mon of each month.* **www**.tourisme-rhin.com

Situated near the German border, this octagonal citadel is the military strategist Vauban’s masterpiece. Built between 1698 and 1707, the citadel forms a typical star-shaped pattern, with symmetrical towers enclosing 48 equal squares. In the center, from where straight streets radiate for ease of defense,

THE CITADEL OF NEUF-BRISACH



Porte de Bâle

The outer ring of defenses was built around two moats.

Place d’Armes, once the parade ground, provided the innermost refuge.

Porte de Strasbourg was originally protected by a draw-bridge.

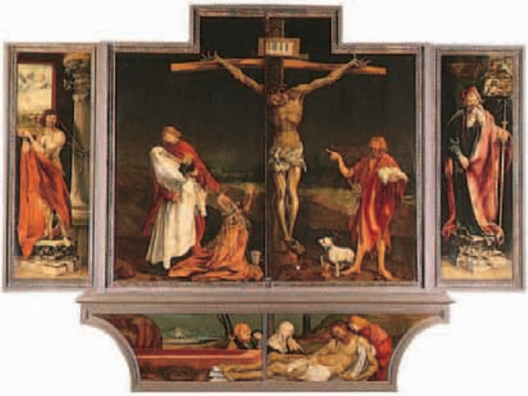
Bastion

The fortress is divided into 48 ilôts or squares.

The fortress walls are 30 ft (9 m) high and 14.5 ft (4.5 m) wide at their base.

The Porte de Belfort houses the Musée Vauban. A walk links Porte de Belfort with Porte de Colmar.

Porte de Colmar



The celebrated Issenheim altarpiece by Matthias Grünewald in Colmar

is the place d'Armes and the Eglise St-Louis, which was added in 1731–6. This was the usual homage to Louis XV, implying that the church was dedicated to the King, rather than the saint.

The Porte de Belfort houses the **Musée Vauban**, which includes a model of the town, showing the outlying defenses, now concealed by woodland. They represent Vauban's barrier to the fortress and it is to his credit that the citadel was never taken.

🏛 Musée Vauban
Pl Porte de Belfort. ***Tel*** *03 89 72 03 93.* ○ *May–Oct: Wed–Mon; Nov–Apr: groups only, by appt.* ✋ ♿

Eguisheim ❾

Haut Rhin. 👥 *1,500.* 🚌 ℹ *22a grand'rue (03 89 23 40 33).*
www.ot-eguisheim.fr

Eguisheim is an exquisite small town, laid out within three concentric rings of 13th-century ramparts. The ensemble of austere fortifications and domestic elegance within makes for a surprisingly harmonious whole.

In the center of town is the octagonal feudal **castle** of the Counts of Eguisheim. A Renaissance fountain in front has the statue of Bruno Eguisheim, born here in 1002. He became Pope Léon IX and was later canonized.

The grand'rue is lined with half-timbered houses, many showing their construction date. Close to the castle is the **Marbacherhof**, a monastic tithe barn and cornhall. On a neighboring square, the modern parish church retains the original Romanesque sculpted tympanum.

The rest of the town has its share of Hansel-and-Gretel atmosphere, while inviting courtyards offer tastings of *grands crus*. From rue de Hautvilliers, outside the ramparts, a marked path leads through scenic vineyards.

Colmar ❿

Haut Rhin. 👥 *68,000.* 🚆 🚌 ℹ *4 rue d'Unterlinden (03 89 20 68 92).* 🛒 *Mon, Wed, Thu & Sat.*
www.ot-colmar.fr

Colmar is the best preserved city in Alsace. As a trading post and river port, Colmar had its heyday in the 16th century, when wine merchants shipped their wine along the waterways running through the picturesque canal quarter, now known as **Petite Venise**. "Little Venice" is best seen on a leisurely boat trip that takes you from the tanners' quarter to the Rue des Tanneurs. The adjoining Place de l'Alsacienne Douane is dominated by the **Koifhüs**, a galleried customs house with a Burgundian tiled roof overlooking half-timbered pastel houses which sport sculpted pillars.

Nearby, the place de la Cathédrale quarter is full of 16th-century houses. **Eglise St-Martin**, essentially Gothic, has a noted south portal. To the west, the place des Dominicains, with cafés, is dwarfed by the Gothic **Eglise Dominicaine**. Inside is *La Vierge au Buisson de Rose*s (1473), the red and gold "Virgin of the Rosebush" by Martin Schongauer, a renowned painter and native son of Colmar.

Place d'Unterlinden, the adjoining square, has the **Musée d'Unterlinden**. Set in a Dominican monastery, it displays early Rhenish paintings. The highlight is the Issenheim altarpiece. A masterpiece of emotional intensity, it is part of an early 16th-century Alsatian panel painting by Matthias Grünewald.

In the historic center, the quaint rue des Têtes has the former wine exchange, a Renaissance town house known as the Maison des Têtes because of the grimacing heads on the gabled façade. And in rue Mercière, **Maison Pfister**, with its slender stair turret and galleried flower-decked façade, has come to typify the city.

Along the Quai de la Poissonerie in the Petite Venise area of Colmar

Riquewihr ⑪

Haut Rhin. 👥 *1,100.* 🚌
ℹ *2 rue de 1ère Armée (03 89 73 73 73).* 🛒 *Fri.*
www.ribeauville-riquewihr.com

Vineyards run right up to the ramparts of Riquewihr, the prettiest village on the Route du Vin *(see pp232–3)*. Deeply pragmatic, Riquewihr winemakers plant roses at the end of each row of vines – both for their pretty effect and as early detectors of parasites. The village belonged to the Counts of Wurtemberg until the Revolution and has grown rich on wine, from Tokay and Pinot Gris to Gewürztraminer and Riesling. Virtually an open-air museum, Riquewihr abounds in cobbled alleys, geranium-clad balconies, galleried courtyards, romantic double ramparts, and watchtowers.

From the Hôtel de Ville, the **rue du Général de Gaulle** climbs gently past medieval and Renaissance houses, half-timbered, stone-clad, or corbeled. Oriel windows vie with sculpted portals and medieval sign boards. On the right lies the idyllic **place des Trois Eglises**. A passageway leads through the ramparts to the vineyards on the hill. Further up lies the **Dolder**, a 13th-century belfry, followed by the **Tour des Voleurs** (both are museums, the latter with a medieval torture chamber), marking the second tier of ramparts. Beyond the gateway is the **Cour des Bergers**, gardens laid out around the 16th-century ramparts. Visitors outnumber the locals, in summer or during the superb Christmas market.

The pretty – and popular – village of Riquewihr, set among vineyards

Ribeauvillé ⑫

Haut Rhin. 👥 *4,800.* 🚆 🚌
ℹ *1 grand'rue (03 89 73 73 73).*
🛒 *Sat.* **www**.ribeauville-riquewihr.com

Overlooked by three ruined castles, Ribeauvillé is stiflingly prettified, as may be expected from a favored town on the Route du Vin. This status is partly due to healthy sales of the celebrated *grands crus* of Alsace, especially Riesling. There are ample opportunities for tastings, particularly near the park, in the lower part of town *(see pp232–3)*.

On the grand'rue (No. 14) is the **Pfifferhüs**, the minstrels' house. As locals declare, Ribeauvillé is the capital of the *kougelhopf*, the almond-flavored Alsatian cake.

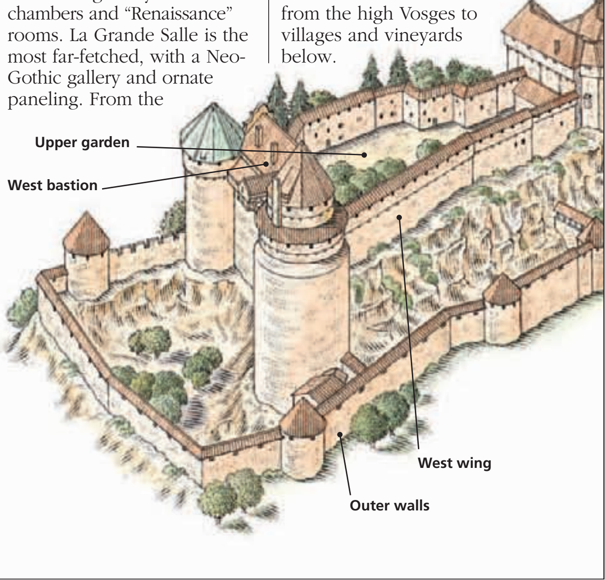
Tortuous alleys wind past steep-roofed artisans' and *vignerons'* houses in the upper part of the town. Beyond are Renaissance fountains, painted façades, and **St Grégoire-le-Grand**, the Gothic parish church. A marked path, which begins in this part of town, leads into the vineyards.

Château du Haut-Koenigsbourg ⑬

Orschwiller. ***Tel*** *03 88 82 50 60.*
○ *daily.* ● *Jan 1, May 1, Dec 25.*
🎫 ✋ ♿ 🎧 🍴
www.haut-koenigsbourg.fr

Looming above the pretty village of St-Hippolyte, this castle is the most popular attraction in Alsace. In 1114, the Swabian Emperor, Frederick of Hohenstaufen, built the first Teutonic castle here, which was destroyed in 1462. Rebuilt and added to under the Habsburgs, it burned down in 1633. At the end of the 19th century, Kaiser Wilhelm II commissioned Berlin architect Bodo Ebhardt to restore the castle. The result of his painstaking work was a precise reconstruction of the original building.

With a drawbridge, fierce keep, and rings of fortifications, this warm sandstone hybrid is a sophisticated feudal château. The Cour d'Honneur is a breathtaking re-creation, with a pointed corner turret and creaky arcaded galleries. Inside are gloomy "Gothic" chambers and "Renaissance" rooms. La Grande Salle is the most far-fetched, with a Neo-Gothic gallery and ornate paneling. From the battlements, almost 2,500 ft (750 m) above the Alsace plain, stretches a Rhineland panorama bordered by the Black Forest and the Alps. On the other side are views from the high Vosges to villages and vineyards below.



Chapelle St-Sébastien outside Dambach-la-Ville, along the Route du Vin

Sélestat ⑭

Bas Rhin. 👥 *17,000.* 🚆 🚌 ℹ *Commanderie Saint Jean, bd du Général Leclerc (03 88 58 87 20).* 🛒 *Tue, Sat.* **www**.selestat-tourisme.com

During the Renaissance, Sélestat was the intellectual center of Alsace, with a tradition of humanism fostered by Beatus Rhenanus, a friend of Erasmus. The **Bibliothèque Humaniste** has a collection of editions of some of the earliest printed books, including the first book to name America, in 1507. Nearby are the Cour des Prélats, a turreted ivy-covered mansion, and the Tour de l'Horloge, a clocktower. **Eglise Ste-Foy** is 12th-century, with an octagonal belltower. Opposite is **Eglise St- Georges**, glittering with green and red "Burgundian tiles."

🏛 **Bibliothèque Humaniste**

1 rue de la Bibliothèque. ***Tel*** *03 88 58 07 20.* ○ *Mon, Wed–Sat am; (Jul–Aug: Wed–Mon exc. Sun am).* ● *public hols.* ♿ **www**. bibliotheque-humaniste.eu

Environs

Medieval **Dambach-la-Ville**, another pretty town, is linked to Andlau and red-tiled Itterswiller by a delightful rural road through vineyards.

Ebersmunster, a picturesque hamlet, has an onion-domed abbey church, whose Baroque interior is a sumptuous display of gilded stucco.

Obernai ⑮

Bas Rhin. 👥 *11,000.* 🚆 🚌 ℹ *pl du Beffroi (03 88 95 64 13).* 🛒 *Thu.* **www**.obernai.fr

Young *Alsaciens* in traditional costume

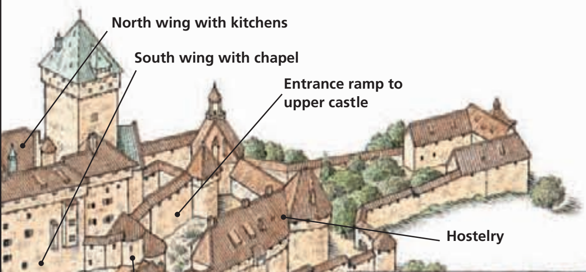
At the north end of the Route du Vin, Obernai retains a flavor of authentic Alsace: residents speak Alsatian, at festivities women wear traditional costume, and church services are well-attended in the cavernous Neo-Gothic **Eglise St-Pierre-et-St-Paul**. The place du Marché is well-preserved and features the gabled **Halle aux Blés**, a 16th-century corn hall (now a restaurant) above a former butcher's store, with a façade adorned with cows' and dragons' heads. Place de la Chapelle, the adjoining square, has a Renaissance fountain and the 16th-century **Hôtel de Ville** and the **Kapellturm**, the galleried Gothic belfry. Side streets have Renaissance and medieval timber-framed houses. A stroll past the cafés on rue du Marché ends in a pleasant park by the ramparts.

Environs

Odile, Alsace's seventh-century patron saint, was born in Obernai but she is venerated on **Mont Sainte-Odile**, to the west.

Molsheim, a former bishopric and fortified market town 6 miles (10 km) north, is noted for its Metzig, a Renaissance-style butchers' guildhall.

Le Mémorial de l'Alsace-Moselle at Schirmeck commemorates the 10,000 who died at the Struthof concentration camp across the valley.



Drawbridge within the walls of Château du Haut-Koenigsbourg

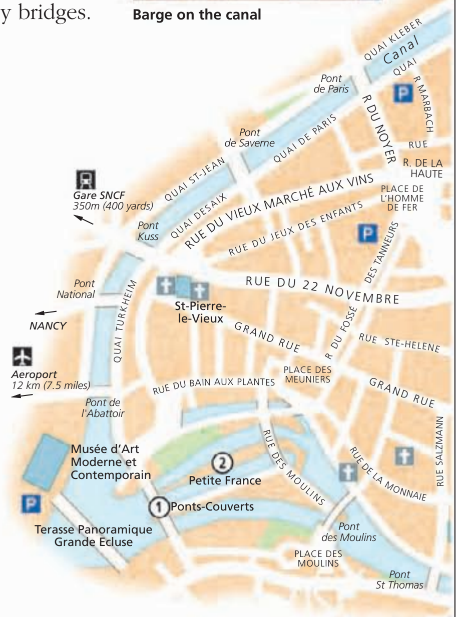
Strasbourg ⑯

Cathedral statue

Halfway between Paris and Prague, Strasbourg is not surprisingly often known as “the crossroads of Europe.” The city wears its European cosmopolitanism with ease – after all, its famous cathedral has catered to both Catholic and Protestant congregations – and as one of the capitals of the European Union has sensibly located the futuristic European Parliament building some way from the historic center. One of the ways to see this, along with the more traditional city sights, is to take a boat trip along the waterways encircling the Old Town. On the way you will take in the Ponts-Couverts, covered bridges linked by medieval watchtowers that provide an observation point for the four Ill canals, and the scenic Petite France, once the tanners' district, dotted with mills and criss-crossed by bridges.

Barge on the canal

The central portal of the west façade of the cathedral


QUAI KLEBER
Canal
QUAI
R. MARBACH
Pont de Paris
R DU NOYER
RUE
R. DE LA HAUTE
Pont de Saverne
QUAI DE PARIS
QUAI ST-JEAN
Gare SNCF
350m (400 yards)
QUAI DESAIX
RUE DU VIEUX MARCHÉ AUX VINS
PLACE DE L'HOMME DE FER
Pont Kuss
RUE DU JEUX DES ENFANTS
DES TANNEURS
RUE DU 22 NOVEMBRE
Pont National
QUAI TURKHEIM
St-Pierre-le-Vieux
NANCY
GRAND RUE
R DU FOSSÉ
RUE STE-HELENE
Aeroport
12 km (7.5 miles)
RUE DU BAIN AUX PLANTES
PLACE DES MEUNIERS
GRAND RUE
Pont de l'Abattoir
RUE SALZMANN
Musée d'Art Moderne et Contemporain
② Petite France
RUE DES MOULINS
RUE DE LA MONNAIE
① Ponts-Couverts
P
Terasse Panoramique Grande Ecluse
Pont des Moulins
PLACE DES MOULINS
Pont St Thomas

Cathédrale Notre-Dame

A masterpiece of stone lacework, the sandstone cathedral “rises like a most sublime, wide-arching tree of God,” as Goethe marveled. Though construction began in the late 11th century (the choir is Romanesque, the nave is Gothic), it ended only in 1439, with the completion of the west façade, begun in 1277. The three portals are ornamented with statues. But the crowning glory is the rose window. The south portal leads to the Gothic Pillar of Angels (c. 1230), set beside the Astronomical Clock: mechanical figures appear accompanied by chimes at 12:31pm. There are wonderful views over the city from the viewing platform, and on some summer evenings there are organ concerts.

In place de la Cathédrale is Maison Kammerzell, now a popular restaurant that was once a rich merchant's mansion, its highly elaborate, carved façade dating from mid-15th– late-16th centuries.

Palais Rohan

2 pl du Château. ***Tel*** *03 88 80 50 50.*
○ *Wed–Mon.* ● *Jan 1, Good Fri, May 1, Nov 1 & 11, Dec 25.*
♿ **www**.musee-strasbourg.org

Designed by the king's architect, Robert de Cotte, in 1730, this grand Classical palace was intended for the Prince-Bishops of Strasbourg. It houses three museums: the Musée des Beaux Arts, the Musée Archéologique, and the Musée des Arts Décoratifs, which contains the sumptuous State Apartments and one of the finest collections of ceramics in France.

The Musée d'Art Moderne et Contemporain on Strasbourg's waterfront

VISITORS' CHECKLIST

Bas Rhin. 👥 *400,000.* ✈ *7.5 miles (12 km) SW Strasbourg.* 🚉 *pl de la Gare (08 92 35 35 35).* 🚌 *pl des Halles (03 88 23 43 23).* ℹ *17 pl de la Cathédrale (03 88 52 28 28).* 🛒 *Wed, Fri.* 🎭 *International Music Festival (Jun–Jul).* **www**.ot-strasbourg.fr

has fascinating exhibits on local traditions and popular arts and crafts.

🏛 Musée de l'Oeuvre Notre-Dame

3 pl du Château. ***Tel*** *03 88 52 50 00.* ○ *Tue–Sun.* ● *Jan 1, Good Fri, May 1, Nov 1, Dec 25.* 🎧 ♿ *ground floor.*

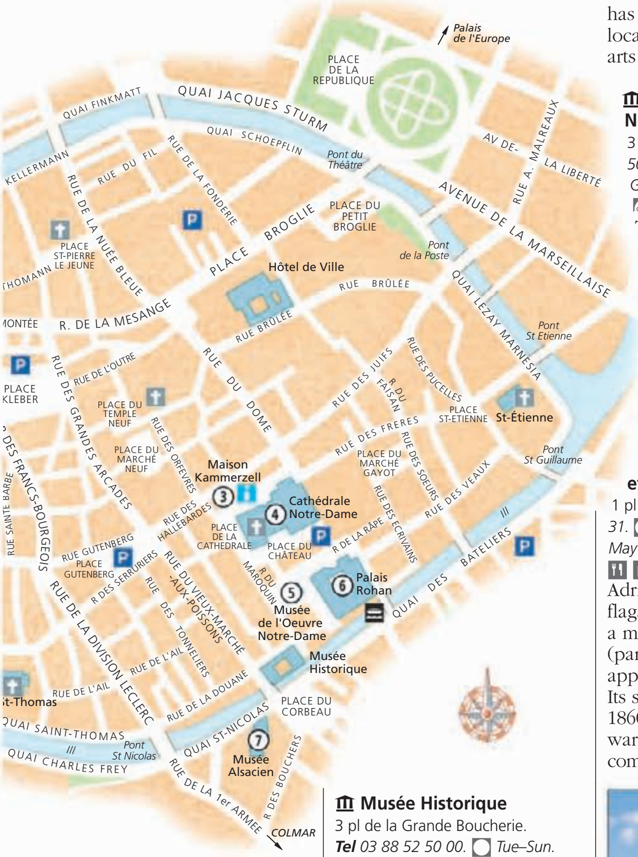
The cathedral's impressive museum contains much of its original sculpture as well as magnificent 11th-century stained glass. This somber gabled house also displays a collection of Medieval and Renaissance Alsatian art.

🏛 Musée d'Art Moderne et Contemporain

1 pl Hans-Jean Arp. ***Tel*** *03 88 23 31 31.* ○ *Tue–Sun.* ● *Jan 1, Good Fri, May 1, Nov 1 & 11, Dec 25.* 🎧 ♿ 🍴 🛍 ***Concerts, movie theater.***

Adrien Fainsilber's cultural flagship for the 21st century is a marvel of glass and light (particularly at night when it appears to float on the river). Its superb collections run from 1860–1950 and from 1950 onward. The Art Café is welcome respite for art-weary feet.

Ponts-Couverts with medieval watchtowers over the canals



Palais de l'Europe
PLACE DE LA REPUBLIQUE
QUAI FINKMATT
QUAI JACQUES STURM
QUAI SCHOEPFLIN
Pont du Théâtre
AV DE LA LIBERTÉ
RUE A. MALREAUX
AVENUE DE LA MARSEILLAISE
KELLERMANN
RUE DU FIL
RUE DE LA FONDERIE
RUE DE LA NUÉE BLEUE
PLACE ST-PIERRE LE JEUNE
THOMANN
PLACE BROGLIE
PLACE DU PETIT BROGLIE
Pont de la Poste
Hôtel de Ville
RUE BRÛLÉE
QUAI LEZAY MARNESIA
Pont St Etienne
MONTÉE
R. DE LA MESANGE
RUE DE L'OUTRE
PLACE KLEBER
RUE DES GRANDES ARCADES
PLACE DU TEMPLE NEUF
RUE DU DOME
RUE DES JUIFS
R DU FAISAN
RUE DES PUCELLES
PLACE ST-ETIENNE
St-Étienne
Pont St Guillaume
RUE DES FRERES
PLACE DU MARCHÉ GAYOT
RUE DES SOEURS
RUE DES VEAUX
RUE DES ORFÈVRES
PLACE DU MARCHÉ NEUF
Maison Kammerzell
③
Cathédrale Notre-Dame
④
RUE DES HALLEBARDES
PLACE DE LA CATHEDRALE
PLACE DU CHÂTEAU
R DE LA RÂPE
RUE DES ECRIVAINS
BATELIERS
RUE DES FRANCS-BOURGEOIS
RUE SAINTE BARBE
RUE GUTENBERG
PLACE GUTENBERG
R DES SERRURIERS
R DU MAROQUIN
⑤
Musée de l'Oeuvre Notre-Dame
⑥
Palais Rohan
QUAI DES BATELIERS
RUE DU VIEUX-MARCHÉ-AUX-POISSONS
RUE DES TONNELIERS
RUE DE LA DIVISION LECLERC
Musée Historique
RUE DE L'AIL
RUE DE LA DOUANE
PLACE DU CORBEAU
St-Thomas
QUAI SAINT-THOMAS
QUAI CHARLES FREY
Pont St Nicolas
QUAI ST-NICOLAS
⑦
Musée Alsacien
R DES BOUCHERS
RUE DE LA 1er ARMEE
COLMAR

STRASBOURG CITY CENTER

Cathédrale Notre-Dame ④
Maison Kammerzell ③
Musée Alsacien ⑦
Musée de l'Oeuvre Notre-Dame ⑤
Palais Rohan ⑥
Petite France ②
Ponts-Couverts ①

0 meters 250

0 yards 250

Key to Symbols *see back flap*

🏛 Musée Historique

3 pl de la Grande Boucherie. ***Tel*** *03 88 52 50 00.* ○ *Tue–Sun.* ● *Jan 1, Good Fri, May 1, Nov 1 & 11, Dec 25.* 🎧 ♿

The museum occupies the 16th-century city abattoir and focuses on Strasbourg's political and military history.

🏛 Musée Alsacien

23 quai St-Nicolas. ***Tel*** *03 88 52 50 00.* ○ *Wed–Mon.* ● *Jan 1, Good Fri, May 1, Nov 1, Dec 25.* 🎧

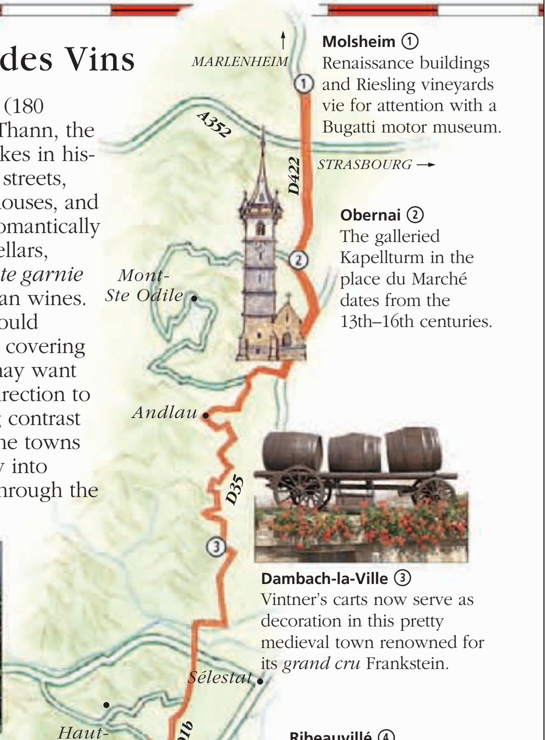
Housed in a series of interconnecting Renaissance buildings, the museum

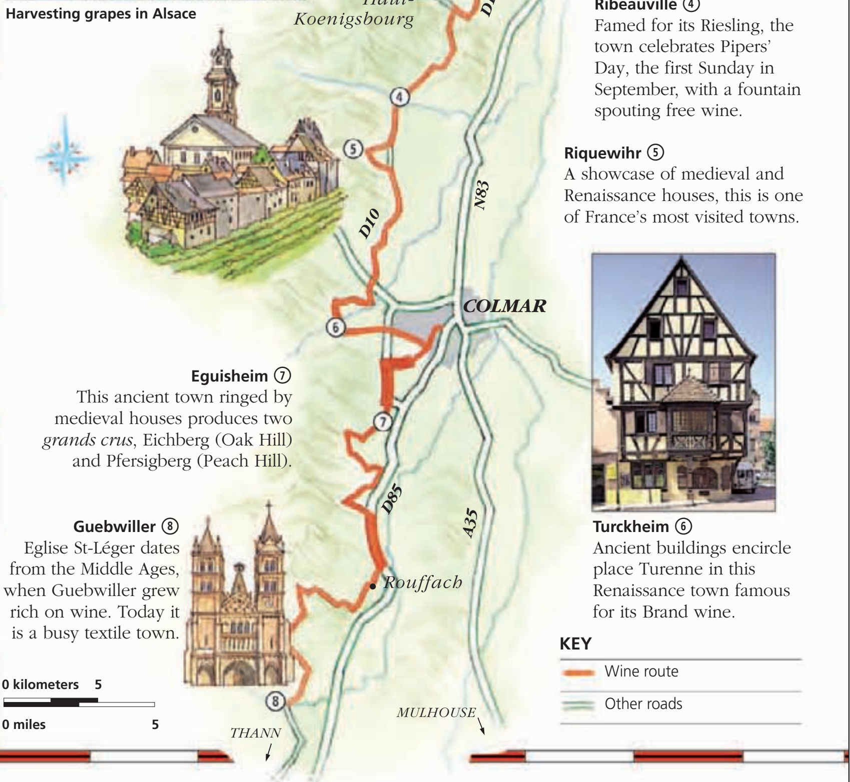
The Alsace Route des Vins

Alsatian wine master

Meandering over 110 miles (180 km) from Marlenheim to Thann, the picturesque wine route takes in historic towns with cobbled streets, medieval timber-framed houses, and Renaissance fountains. Romantically appointed *winstubs,* or cellars, offer traditional *choucroute garnie* and flowery white Alsatian wines. Dedicated wine lovers could spend two or three days covering the route at leisure, or may want to make shorter trips in either direction to or from Colmar. For a refreshing contrast from the unremitting charm of the towns and villages, escape occasionally into *sentiers viticoles* – lovely paths through the vineyards themselves.

Harvesting grapes in Alsace





Molsheim ①
Renaissance buildings and Riesling vineyards vie for attention with a Bugatti motor museum.

Obernai ②
The galleried Kapellturm in the place du Marché dates from the 13th–16th centuries.

Dambach-la-Ville ③
Vintner's carts now serve as decoration in this pretty medieval town renowned for its *grand cru* Frankstein.

Ribeauvillé ④
Famed for its Riesling, the town celebrates Pipers' Day, the first Sunday in September, with a fountain spouting free wine.

Riquewihr ⑤
A showcase of medieval and Renaissance houses, this is one of France's most visited towns.

Turckheim ⑥
Ancient buildings encircle place Turenne in this Renaissance town famous for its Brand wine.

Eguisheim ⑦
This ancient town ringed by medieval houses produces two *grands crus*, Eichberg (Oak Hill) and Pfersigberg (Peach Hill).

Guebwiller ⑧
Eglise St-Léger dates from the Middle Ages, when Guebwiller grew rich on wine. Today it is a busy textile town.

KEY

🟧	Wine route
🟩	Other roads

ALSACE WINE

Alsace wines are usually aromatic, dry, and full-bodied. All are white except Pinot Noir, used for light reds.

A late-harvested Alsatian classic

KEY FACTS

Location and climate
Protected by the Vosges, Alsace has a warm climate and France's lowest annual rainfall.

Grape varieties
Alsace wines are known simply by their grape variety. ***Gewürztraminer***, with its exotic rose-petal character, is most typically Alsatian, although the ***Riesling*** is arguably the finest. ***Muscat*** is another aromatic variety. Spicy but less assertive than Gewürztraminer, ***Pinot Gris*** and the crisper, dry ***Pinot Blanc*** go well with food. ***Pinot Noir*** is the only red variety.

Lusciously rich, sweet, late-harvested wines are an Alsace specialty.

Best producers
Albert Boxler, Marcel Deiss, Rolly Gassmann, Beyer, Meyer-Fonne, Kuentz-Bas, Domaine Weinbach, Dopff & Irion, Olivier Zind-Humbrecht, Charles Schléret, Domaines Schlumberger, Domaine Ostertag, Domaine Trimbach, Hugel & Fils, Cave de Turckheim.

Good vintages
2004, 2003, 2001, 1998, 1996, 1995.

The 12th-century chapel of the Château du Haut-Barr, near Saverne

Saverne ⑰

Bas Rhin. 👥 *10,500.* 🚂 🚌 ℹ *37 grand rue (03 88 91 80 47).* 🛒 *Tue & Thu.* **www**.ot-saverne.fr

Framed by hills, and situated on the river Zorn and the Marne-Rhine canal, Saverne is a pretty sight. The town was a fief of the prince-bishops of Strasbourg and its sandstone Château des Rohan was a favorite summer residence. Today, it houses the **Musée du Château des Rohan**, whose collection traces Saverne's past. On the far side of the château, the grand'rue is studded with restaurants and timber-framed Renaissance houses.

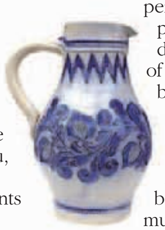
🏛 Musée du Château des Rohan
Château des Rohan. ***Tel*** *03 88 91 06 28.* ◯ *Mar–Nov: Wed–Mon pms (mid-Jun–mid-Sep: all day); Dec–Feb: Sun pm.* 🚫 ♿ *restricted.*

Environs
To the southwest, perched on a rocky spur, the ruined **Château du Haut-Barr** – the "Eye of Alsace" – once commanded the vital pass of Col de Saverne. In **Marmoutier**, 3.5 miles (6 km) farther south, is a renowned abbey church with a Romanesque-Lombard façade and octagonal towers.

Betschdorf ⑱

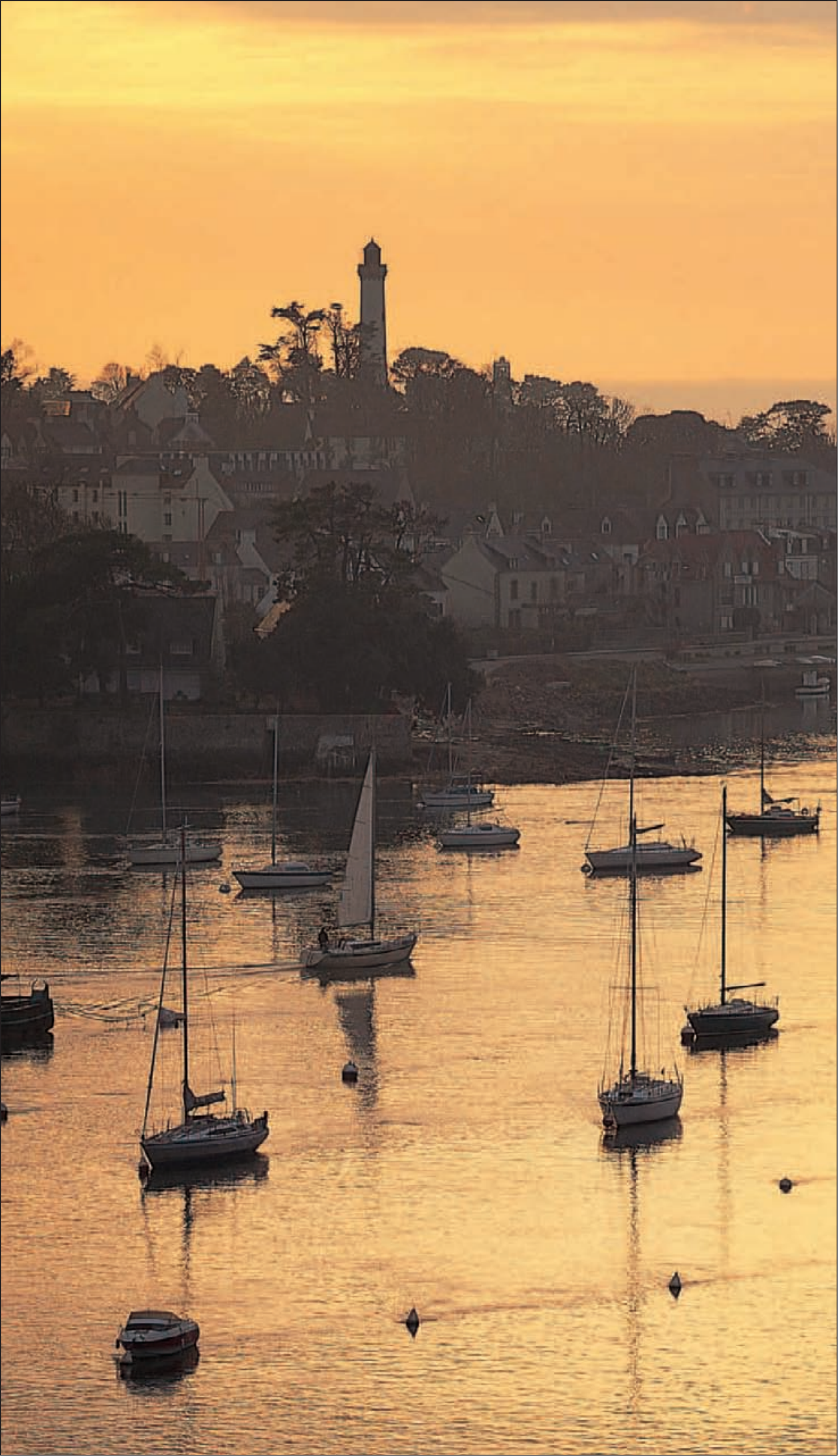
Bas Rhin. 👥 *3,600.* ℹ *La Mairie (03 88 54 44 92).* **www**.betschdorf.com

The vibrant village of Betschdorf borders the Forêt de Haguenau, 27 miles (45 km) north of Strasbourg. Many residents occupy timber-framed houses dating from the 18th century, when pottery made the village prosperous. Generations of potters have passed down the knowledge of the characteristic blue-gray glaze to their sons, while the women have been entrusted with decorating it in cobalt blue. A pottery museum, with a workshop attached, displays rural ceramics. Betschdorf is a good place to try *tartes flambées* – hot, crispy bases topped with cheese or fruit.



Betschdorf pottery

Environs
Another pottery village, **Soufflenheim**, lies 6 miles (10 km) southeast. Its earth-colored pottery is usually painted with bold flowers. To the north, close to the German border, the picturesque town of **Wissembourg** has many half-timbered houses and the second-largest church in Alsace after Strasbourg Cathedral, Eglise St-Pierre et St-Paul.



WESTERN FRANCE

INTRODUCING WESTERN FRANCE 236–245

NORMANDY 246–267

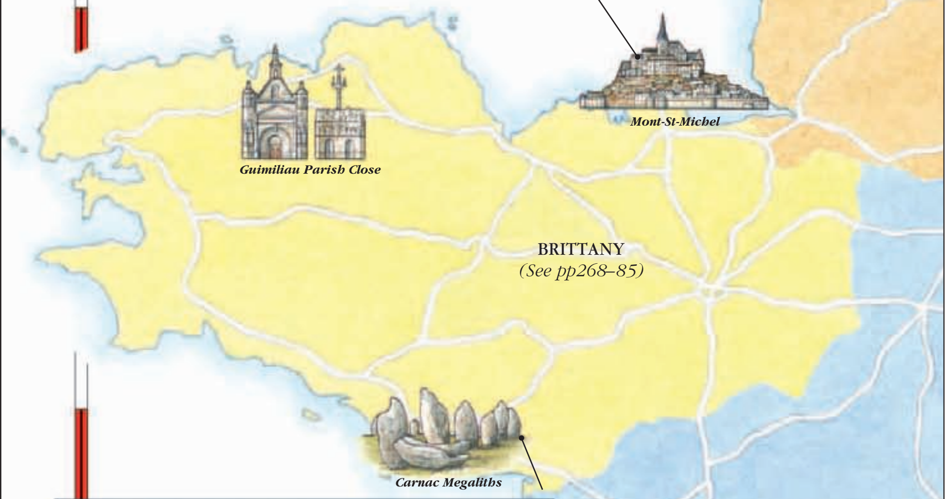
BRITTANY 268–285

THE LOIRE VALLEY 286–313

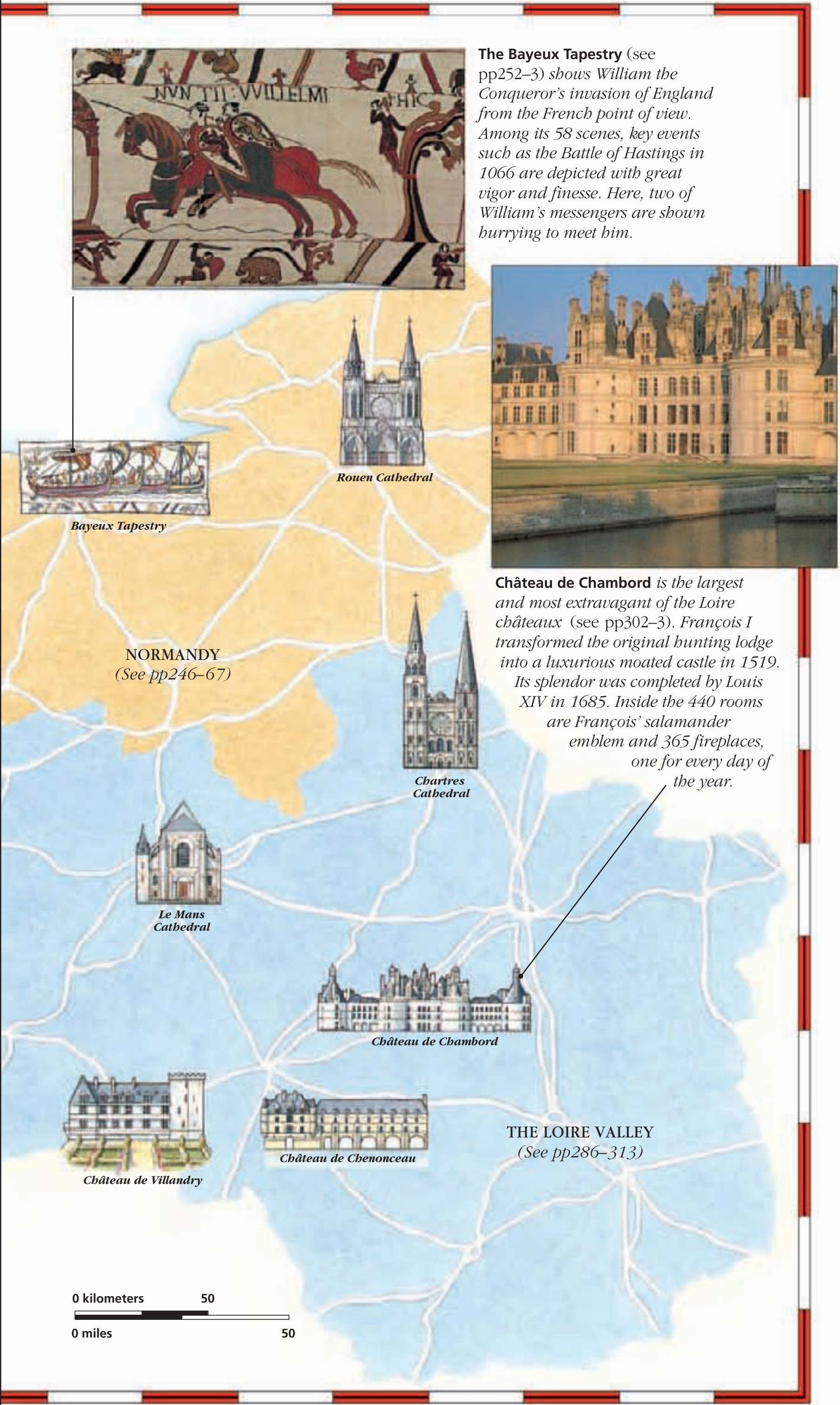
Introducing Western France

The western regions of France have played very different historical roles, from the royal heartland of the Loire Valley to separatist Celtic Brittany. These are mainly rich farming regions, with fishing important along the coasts. Heavy industry and oil refineries are concentrated around Rouen and Le Havre. Visitors come for the wonderful beaches, quiet rural byways, and the sumptuous Loire châteaux. This map shows some of the region's most celebrated sights.

The evocative silhouette of Mont-St-Michel *has welcomed pilgrims since the 11th century. Today nearly one million visitors a year walk across the causeway to the island abbey* (see pp256–61).



The megaliths of Carnac *are evidence of early settlers in Brittany. These ancient granite blocks, arranged in intriguing patterns, date back to 4000 BC and are thought to have had a religious or astronomical purpose* (see p279).



The Bayeux Tapestry (see pp252–3) *shows William the Conqueror's invasion of England from the French point of view. Among its 58 scenes, key events such as the Battle of Hastings in 1066 are depicted with great vigor and finesse. Here, two of William's messengers are shown hurrying to meet him.*

Château de Chambord *is the largest and most extravagant of the Loire châteaux* (see pp302–3). *François I transformed the original hunting lodge into a luxurious moated castle in 1519. Its splendor was completed by Louis XIV in 1685. Inside the 440 rooms are François' salamander emblem and 365 fireplaces, one for every day of the year.*

NVN TIL VVILELMI
HIC
Rouen Cathedral
Bayeux Tapestry
NORMANDY
(See pp246–67)
Chartres Cathedral
Le Mans Cathedral
Château de Chambord
Château de Villandry
Château de Chenonceau
THE LOIRE VALLEY
(See pp286–313)
0 kilometers 50
0 miles 50

The Flavors of Western France

The Atlantic coast, the rich agricultural hinterland of dairy farms, orchards, and vegetable fields, and the rivers of the Loire Valley combine to produce some of France's best loved food. Vegetables are grown in abundance in Brittany and the alluvial soils of the Loire, and the orchards of Normandy are bountiful. Fish from the windswept coast of Brittany or the channel ports of Normandy play a key role in the cuisine. Hearty meat dishes range from the celebrated duck of Rouen to the rabbit and game of the Sologne in the Loire. Fine cheeses are made here, and butter is the favored cooking medium.

Normandy apples

Norman cheese-producer displaying his wares

NORMANDY

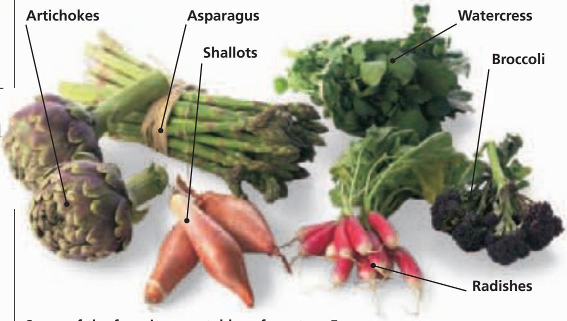
Normandy's lush green pastures, dotted with brown and white cows, and orchards heavy with apples, make it a great source of veal, milk, cheese, cream, butter, apples, and pears. Duck is a speciality, as is *pre-salé* lamb from the salt-rich marshes around Mont-St-Michel. Many vegetables are grown and wild mushrooms thrive in the damp meadows and woodlands in the fall. Fish is important, with catches of sole, plaice, and mackerel, skate and herrings, and 80 percent of France's scallops, plus a great variety of shellfish.

Camembert is Normandy's most famous cheese; others include Pont l'Evêque, the pungent-smelling Livarot, rich Brillat-Savarin, and Petit-Suisse, a small, fresh white cheese eaten with sugar.

Apples symbolize Normandy above all, and cider is traditionally drunk with food while Calvados, the powerful apple brandy, is served with meals as *le trou normand.*

BRITTANY

The extensive coastline yields an abundance of fish and seafood. Oysters are highly prized, as are mussels, harvested both wild and cultivated. Other fish caught



Some of the favorite vegetables of western France

REGIONAL DISHES AND SPECIALTIES

Pears

Fish dominates the menus here, most spectacularly in the *plateau de fruits de mer*, featuring oysters, crabs, langoustines, prawns, shrimp, cockles, and clams, piled on a bed of ice. Oysters are served simply with lemon or shallot vinegar, but can also come stuffed, gratinéed, or wrapped in pastry. Fresh fish may be grilled, baked in sea salt (*sel de Guérande* is the best), braised in cider, or served with *beurre blanc* ("white butter" sauce with shallots, wine vinegar, and cream). Lobster is often served *à l'Armoricaine. Cotriade*, the Breton fish stew, combines a selection of the catch of the day with onions and potatoes. *Moules marinières* (mussels steamed in white wine with shallots and butter) is the popular classic. As a change from fish, look for *gigot de sept heures* – lamb slowly pot-roasted for seven hours.

Homard à l'armoricaine
Lobster, served in a herby tomato and onion sauce, enriched with brandy.

Superb Breton oysters for sale at a regional fish market

include monkfish, tuna, sardines, scallops, and lobster. Pig-rearing is important, so expect roast pork, smoked sausages, hams, and *boudin noir* (black/blood pudding), delicious served with apples. A great delicacy is the *pre-salé* lamb from Ile de Ouessant, served with haricot beans. Artichokes are the symbol of Brittany, an indication of the importance of vegetables, especially winter produce like cauliflower, onions, and potatoes.

Crêpes (pancakes), both sweet and savory, are a key element of the Breton diet. They come as buckwheat *galettes* with savory fillings such as ham, cheese, spinach, or mushrooms, or as lacy light dessert versions with sweet fillings and known as *crêpes dentelles* (*dentelle* meaning "lace").

THE LOIRE VALLEY

This huge region takes pride in a truly diverse range of specialties. Grass-fed cattle are raised in Anjou, and sheep in the Berry region. Excellent free-range chickens, *poulet fermier Loué*, are raised in Touraine and the Orléanais. The forests and lakes of the Sologne yield deer, wild boar, pheasant, partridge, hare, and duck. Charcuterie includes *rillettes* (shredded and potted pork) and ham from the Vendée. The Atlantic coast produces a variety of fish and the Loire itself is a source of pike, shad, tench, salmon, eels, and lampreys. Mushrooms are cultivated in the limestone caves around Saumur, but of the many vegetables grown, best of all is Sologne asparagus. Superb goats' cheeses include St-Maure de Touraine, ash-coated Valençay, and the little Crottins de Chavignol.

Cheese and charcuterie at Loches market in the Loire Valley

ON THE MENU

Alose à l'oseille Shad in a sorrel sauce.

Côte de veau vallée d'Auge Veal in mushrooms, cream, and cider or Calvados.

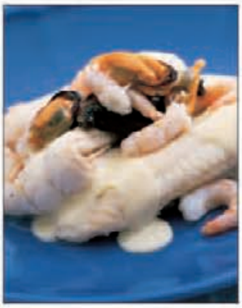
Far aux pruneaux Egg batter pudding baked with prunes.

Kig ha farz Meat and vegetable stew with buckwheat dumpling.

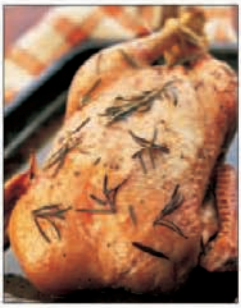
Marmite Dieppoise Assorted fish stewed in cider or white wine with cream.

Tergeule Creamy baked rice pudding with cinnamon.

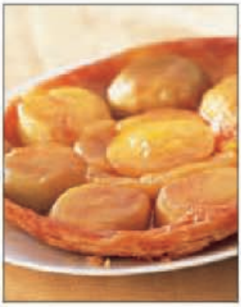
Tripes à la Mode de Caen Tripe with calves' feet, onions or leeks, herbs, and cider.



Sole Normande *Baked sole in sauce of egg and cream, garnished with mussels, oysters, mushrooms, and shrimp.*

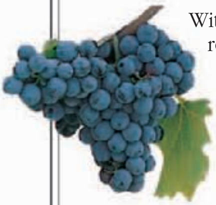


Canard Rouennais *Duclair duck, part-roasted then finished in a rich sauce of duck liver and shallots.*



Tarte tatin *Caramelized upside-down apple tart, originally made at the Hotel Tatin in the Loire Valley.*

France's Wine Regions: the Loire



Cabernet Franc, red grape of the Loire

With a few exceptions, the Loire is a region of good rather than great wines. The fertile agricultural soils of the meandering flatlands of the "Garden of France" are fine for fruit and vegetables, less so for the production of great wines. The cool, northern, Atlantic-influenced climate nonetheless produces refreshing reds and summer rosés, both dry and lusciously sweet white wines and attractively bracing sparkling wines. Dry white wines are very much in the majority here, and are usually intended for early consumption, so vintages in the Loire tend to matter less than in the classic red wine regions.

LOCATOR MAP

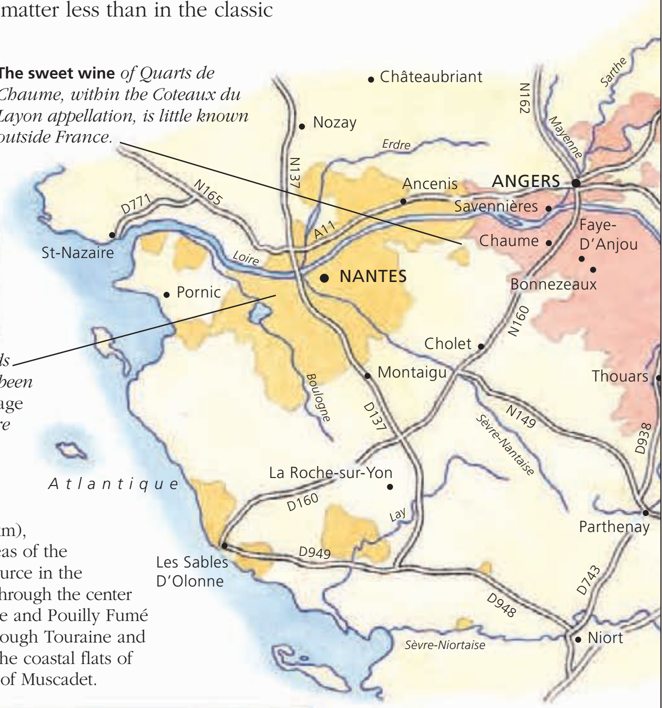
- 🟥 *Loire wine region*

QUARTS DE CHAUME
CHATEAU DE BELLE RIVE
APPELLATION QUARTS DE CHAUME CONTROLÉE

The sweet wine *of Quarts de Chaume, within the Coteaux du Layon appellation, is little known outside France.*

CHATEAU du CLÉRAY

Muscadet, *with the words* sur lie *on the label, has been aged on its "lees"* (see page 27), *giving the wine more flavor and interest.*


Châteaubriant
Nozay
Erdre
N162
Sarthe
Mayenne
N137
Ancenis
ANGERS
Savennières
Faye-D'Anjou
Chaume
Bonnezeaux
D771
N165
A11
St-Nazaire
Loire
NANTES
Pornic
N160
Cholet
Montaigu
Thouars
Boulogne
D137
N149
Sèvre-Nantaise
D938
Atlantique
La Roche-sur-Yon
D160
Lay
Parthenay
Les Sables D'Olonne
D949
D743
D948
Sèvre-Niortaise
Niort

WINE REGIONS

The Loire, flowing for some 620 miles (1,000 km), links the major wine areas of the Loire Valley. From its source in the Ardèche, it flows north through the center of France to the Sancerre and Pouilly Fumé vineyards, then west through Touraine and Anjou, finally reaching the coastal flats of the Pays Nantais, home of Muscadet.

Clos de l' Echo
VENTE

Clos de l'Echo, Chinon, producer of fine, herbaceous red wine

KEY

- 🟨 Pays Nantais
- 🟥 Anjou-Saumur
- ▨ Haut-Poitou
- 🟩 Touraine
- 🟧 Central Vineyards

0 kilometers 15

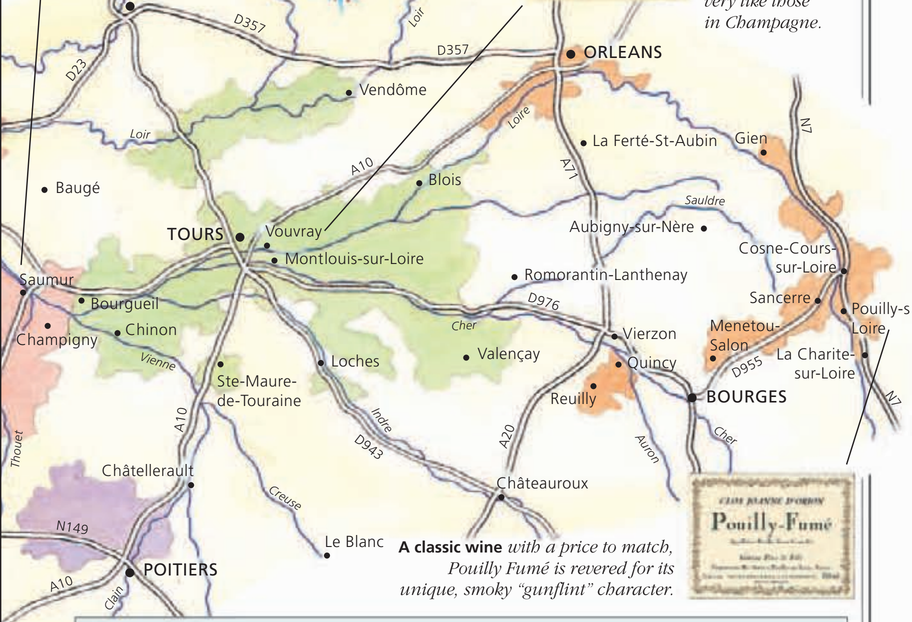
0 miles 15

SAUMUR CHAMPIGNY
DOMAINE FILLIATREAU
VIEILLES VIGNES
1986

This red wine *has been made using grapes from* vieilles vignes – *the oldest and the best vines on the grower's property.*

Red wine vineyards at Bourgueil

Vouvray *makes still and sparkling white wine, the latter often aged in chalk caves very like those in Champagne.*


LE MANS
D357
Loir
D357
ORLEANS
D23
Vendôme
Loir
Loire
La Ferté-St-Aubin
Gien
N7
A71
A10
Blois
Baugé
Sauldre
Aubigny-sur-Nère
TOURS
Vouvray
Montlouis-sur-Loire
Cosne-Cours-sur-Loire
Romorantin-Lanthenay
Saumur
Bourgueil
D976
Sancerre
Pouilly-s Loire
Champigny
Chinon
Cher
Vierzon
Menetou-Salon
Vienne
Loches
Valençay
Quincy
La Charité-sur-Loire
D955
Ste-Maure-de-Touraine
Reuilly
BOURGES
N7
Thouet
A10
Indre
A20
Auron
Cher
D943
Châtellerault
Châteauroux
Creuse
N149
Le Blanc
POITIERS
A10
Clain
Pouilly-Fumé

A classic wine *with a price to match, Pouilly Fumé is revered for its unique, smoky "gunflint" character.*

KEY FACTS ABOUT LOIRE WINES

Location and Climate

Fertile agricultural soils support fruit, vegetables, and cereals; the poorer soils support grapes. The climate is cool, influenced by the Atlantic, giving the wines a refreshing acidity.

Grape Varieties

The ***Melon de Bourgogne*** makes simple, dry white wines. The ***Sauvignon*** makes gooseberryish, flinty dry whites, finest in Sancerre and Pouilly Fumé but also good in Touraine. The ***Chenin Blanc*** makes dry and medium Anjou, Savennières, Vouvray, Montlouis, and Saumur, sparkling Vouvray and Saumur, and the famous sweet whites, Bonnezeaux, Vouvray, and Quarts de Chaume. Summery reds are made from the ***Gamay*** and the fruity, herbaceous ***Cabernet Franc***.

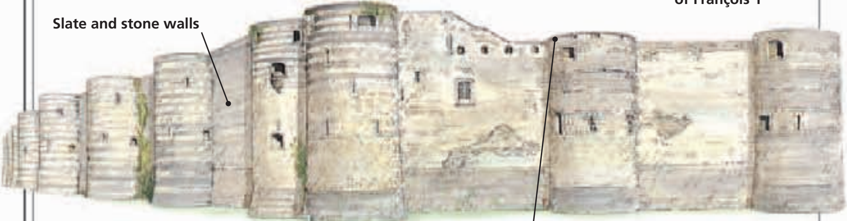
Good Producers

Muscadet: Sauvion, Guy Bossard, Michel Bregeon. *Anjou, Savennières, Vouvray*: Richou, Ogereau, Nicolas Joly, Huet, Domaine des Aubuissières, Bourillon-Dorléans, Jacky Blot, Domaine Gessey. *Touraine* (white): Pibaleau. *Saumur-Champigny* (red): Filliatreau, Chateâu du Hureau. *Chinon, Bourgueil*: Couly-Dutheil, Yves Loiseau. *Sancerre, Pouilly Fumé, Ménétou-Salon*: Francis Cotat, Vacheron, Mellot, Vincent Pinard.

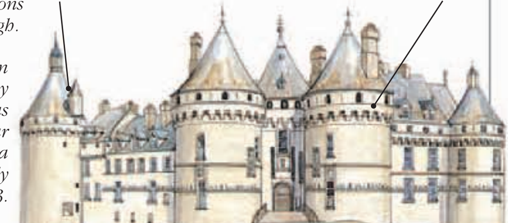
From Defense to Decoration

The great châteaus of the Loire Valley gradually evolved from purely defensive structures to decorative palaces. With the introduction of firearms, castles lost their defensive function and comfort and taste predominated. Defensive elements like towers, battlements, moats, and gatehouses were retained largely as symbols of rank and ancestry. Renaissance additions, such as galleries and dormer windows, added elegance.

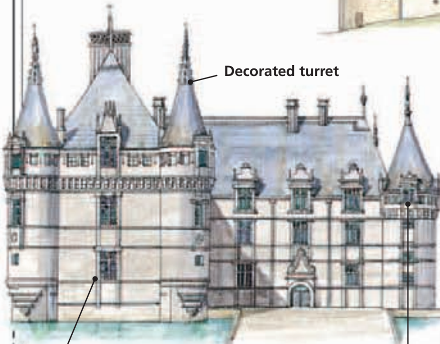
Salamander emblem of François 1


Slate and stone walls
Fortifications with pepper-pot towers removed

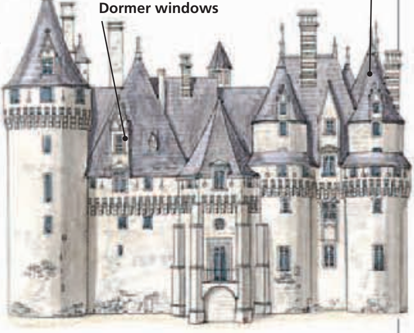
Angers (see p291), *a fortress built from 1230–40 by Louis IX, stands on a rocky hill in the town center. In 1585, Henri III removed the pepper-pot shaped towers from 17 fortifications which were formerly 30 m (98 ft) high.*


Circular tower, formerly defensive
Corbelled walkways, once useful in battle

Chaumont (see p306) *was rebuilt in 1445–1510 in Renaissance style by the Amboise family. Although it has a defensive appearance, with circular towers, corbeled walkways, and a gatehouse, these features are mainly decorative. It was restored after c.1833.*


Decorated turret
Renaissance carved windows
Pilasters (columns)

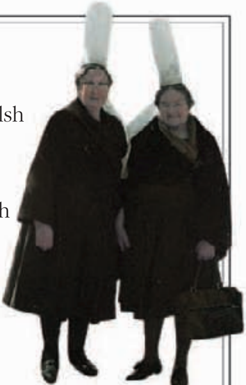
Azay-le-Rideau (see p296), *regarded as one of the most elegant and well-designed Renaissance châteaux, was built by finance minister Gilles Berthelot (1518–1527) and his wife Philippa Lesbahy. It is a mixture of traditional turrets with Renaissance pilasters and pinnacles. Most dramatic is the interior staircase with its three storys of twin bays and an intricately decorated pediment.*


Cylindrical tower
Dormer windows

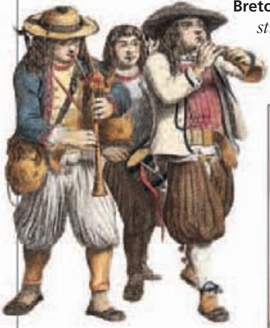
Ussé (see p295) *was built in 1462 by Jean de Bueil as a fortress with parapets containing openings for missiles, battlements, and gunloops. The Espinay family, chamberlains to both Louis XI and Charles VIII, bought the château and changed the walls overlooking the main court-yard to Renaissance style with dormer windows and pilasters. In the 17th century the north wing was demolished to create palatial terraces.*

Breton Traditions

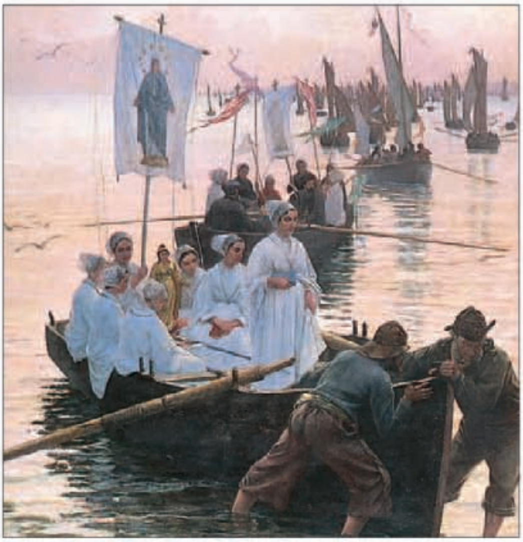
Brittany was christened Breiz Izel (Little Britain) by the Welsh and Cornish migrants who fled here in the 5th and 6th centuries AD and imposed their customs, language, and religion on the local Gauls. Brittany resisted Charlemagne, the Vikings, the Normans, English alliances, and even French rule until 1532. Today, Breton is taught in some schools, and a busy calendar keeps Brittany in touch with its past and with other Celtic regions.



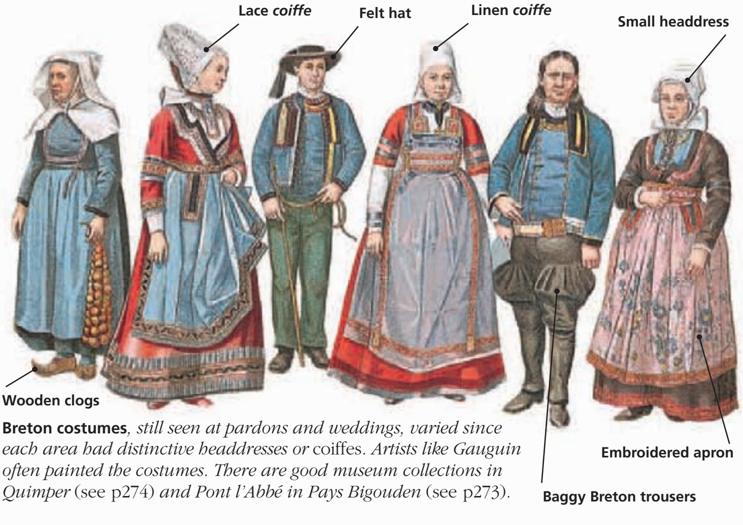
Bigouden lace headdresses



Breton music *has strong Celtic links. Instruments like the* biniou, *similar to the bagpipes, and the oboe-like* bombarde *are often heard at local festivals.*



A pardon *is an annual religious festival honoring a local saint. The name derives from the granting of indulgences to pardon the sins of the past year. Some* padons, *like those at Ste- Anne d'Auray and Ste- Anne-la-Palud, still attract thousands of pilgrims who carry banners and holy relics through the streets. Most* pardons *take place between April and September.*



Breton costumes, *still seen at pardons and weddings, varied since each area had distinctive headdresses or* coiffes. *Artists like Gauguin often painted the costumes. There are good museum collections in Quimper* (see p274) *and Pont l'Abbé in Pays Bigouden* (see p273).

Brittany's Coastal Wildlife

Starfish

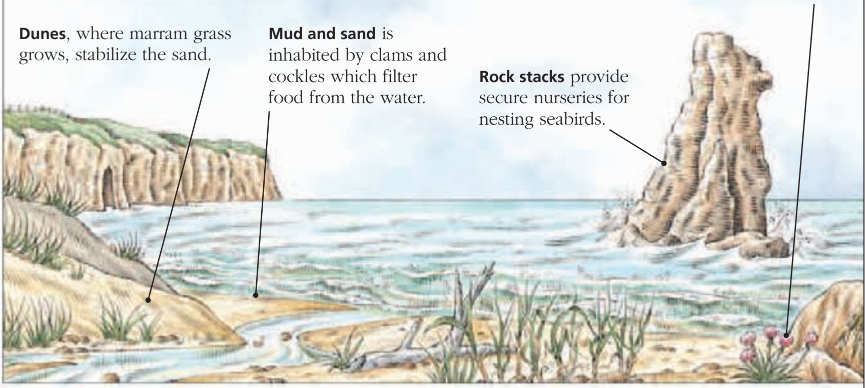
With its granite cliffs, sweeping bays, rias, and deep estuaries, the Brittany coastline contains a wealth of varied wildlife habitats. Parts of the coast have a tidal range of more than 150 ft (50 m), the highest in France, and this great variation in sea level divides marine life into several distinct zones. Most of the region's famous shellfish, including mussels, clams, and oysters, live on the lower shore, either on rocks or in muddy sand where they are submerged for most of the day. Higher zones are the preserve of limpets and barnacles and several kinds of seaweed which can survive out of the water for long periods. Above the sea, towering cliffs offer a nursery for seabirds and a foothold for many kinds of wild flowers.

Cliffs at the Pointe du Raz, Brittany

The Ile de Bréhat at low tide

FEATURES OF THE COAST

This scene shows some of the wildlife habitats found on the Brittany coastline. When exploring the shore, make a note of the tide times, particularly if you plan to walk along the foot of the cliffs.


Dunes, where marram grass grows, stabilize the sand.

Mud and sand is inhabited by clams and cockles which filter food from the water.

Rock stacks provide secure nurseries for nesting seabirds.

Salt-marsh flowers are at their best in late summer.

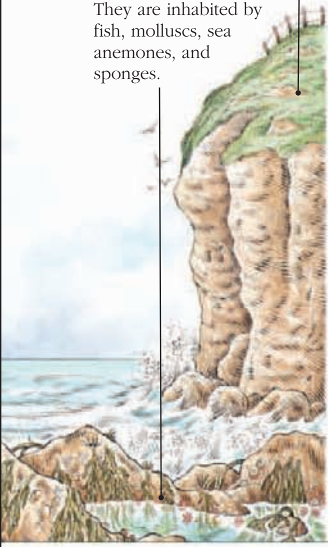
OYSTER BEDS

Like most marine molluscs, oysters begin their lives as tiny floating larvae. The first step in *ostréiculture*, or oyster cultivation, consists of providing the larvae with somewhere to settle, which is usually a stack of submerged tiles. The developing oysters are later transferred to beds and left to mature before being collected for the market.

Oyster beds at Cancale

Clifftop turf often contains a narrow band of wild flowers sandwiched between fields and the sea.

Rockpools are flooded twice daily by the tide. They are inhabited by fish, molluscs, sea anemones, and sponges.



COASTAL WILDLIFE

The structure of this shore determines the wildlife that lives on it. In a world beset by wind and waves, rocks provide solid anchorage for plants and a secure habitat for many small animals. Muddy sand is rich in nutrients, and has a greater abundance of life – although most of this is concealed beneath the surface.

Cliffs

The rock dove *is a cliff-dwelling ancestor of the well-known city pigeon.*

Thrift *is a common spring flower, found on exposed ledges near the sea.*

Rocks and Rockpools

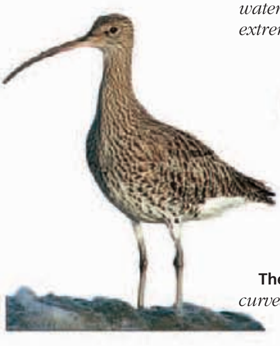
Seaweed *of many different varieties is exposed each day by the falling tide.*

The limpet, *a slow-moving creature, scrapes tiny plants from the rock surface.*

The goby, *with its sharp eyesight, dashes for cover at the first sign of movement above.*

Crabs *live at many different water depths. Some species are extremely good swimmers.*

Mud and Sand



Cockles *live in large numbers just beneath the surface of muddy sand.*

The curlew *has a forceps-like curved beak for extracting shellfish from mud and sand.*

NORMANDY

EURE · SEINE-MARITIME · MANCHE · CALVADOS · ORNE

The quintessential image of Normandy is of a lush, pastoral region of apple orchards and contented cows, cider, and pungent cheeses – but the region also spans the windswept beaches of the Cotentin and the wooded banks of the Seine valley. Highlights include the great abbey churches of Caen, the mighty island of Mont-St-Michel, and Monet's garden at Giverny.

Normandy gets its name from the Viking Norsemen who sailed up the river Seine in the 9th century. Pillagers turned settlers, they made their capital at Rouen – today a cultured cathedral city that commands the east of the region. Here the Seine meanders seaward past the ancient abbeys at Jumièges and St-Wandrille to a coast that became an open-air studio for Impressionist painters during the mid- and late 19th century.

North of Rouen are the chalky cliffs of the Côte d'Albâtre. The mood softens at the port of Honfleur and the elegant resorts of the Côte Fleurie to the west. Inland lies the Pays d'Auge, with its half-timbered manor houses and patch-eyed cows. The western half of Normandy is predominantly rural, a *bocage* countryside of small, high-hedged fields with windbreaks composed of beech trees.

The modern city of Caen is worth visiting for its two great 11th-century abbey churches built by William the Conqueror and his queen, Matilda. Close by in Bayeux, the story of William's invasion of England is told in detail by the town's famous tapestry. Memories of another invasion, the D-Day Landings of 1944, still linger along the Côte de Nacre and the Cotentin Peninsula. Thousands of Allied troops poured ashore onto these magnificent beaches in the closing stages of World War II. The Cotentin Peninsula is capped by the port of Cherbourg, still a strategic naval base. At its western foot stands one of France's greatest attractions: the monastery island of Mont-St-Michel.

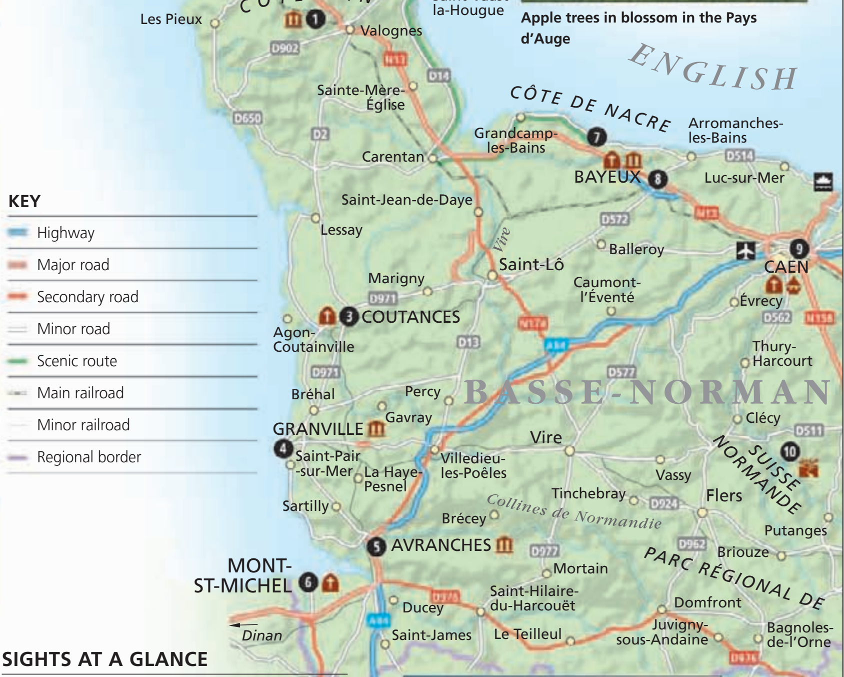
Half-timbered manor house in the village of Beuvron-en-Auge, near Lisieux

◁ **Rich pastures and brown and white Norman cattle, the traditional wealth of the province**

Exploring Normandy

Normandy's rich historical sights and diverse landscape make it ideal for touring by car or bicycle. Rewarding coastal drives and good beaches can be found along the windswept Côte d'Albâtre and the Cotentin Peninsula. Farther south is one of France's most celebrated sights, Mont-St-Michel. Inland, follow the meanders of the Seine valley, passing cider orchards and half-timbered houses along the way, to visit historic Rouen and Monet's garden at Giverny.

Apple trees in blossom in the Pays d'Auge


Cap de la Hague
Beaumont-Hague
Barfleur
D901
② CHERBOURG
Les Pieux
COTENTIN ①
Saint-Vaast-la-Hougue
Valognes
D902
N13
D14
Sainte-Mère-Église
D650
D2
ENGLISH
CÔTE DE NACRE
Grandcamp-les-Bains
⑦
Arromanches-les-Bains
D514
Carentan
BAYEUX ⑧
Luc-sur-Mer
Saint-Jean-de-Daye
Lessay
D572
N13
Vire
Balleroy
⑨
Saint-Lô
CAEN
Caumont-l'Éventé
Évrecy
Marigny
D971
D562
N158
③ COUTANCES
Agon-Coutainville
N174
A84
D13
Thury-Harcourt
D971
D577
Bréhal
Percy
BASSE-NORMAN
Gavray
Clécy
GRANVILLE
D511
④
Saint-Pair-sur-Mer
Vire
SUISSE NORMANDE
⑩
La Haye-Pesnel
Villedieu-les-Poêles
Vassy
Tinchebray
D924
Flers
Sartilly
Collines de Normandie
Brécey
Putanges
⑤ AVRANCHES
D962
D977
Briouze
MONT-ST-MICHEL ⑥
Mortain
PARC RÉGIONAL DE
D976
Saint-Hilaire-du-Harcouët
Domfront
Ducey
A84
Dinan
Saint-James
Le Teilleul
Juvigny-sous-Andaine
Bagnoles-de-l'Orne
D976
Rennes
KEY
Highway
Major road
Secondary road
Minor road
Scenic route
Main railroad
Minor railroad
Regional border

SIGHTS AT A GLANCE

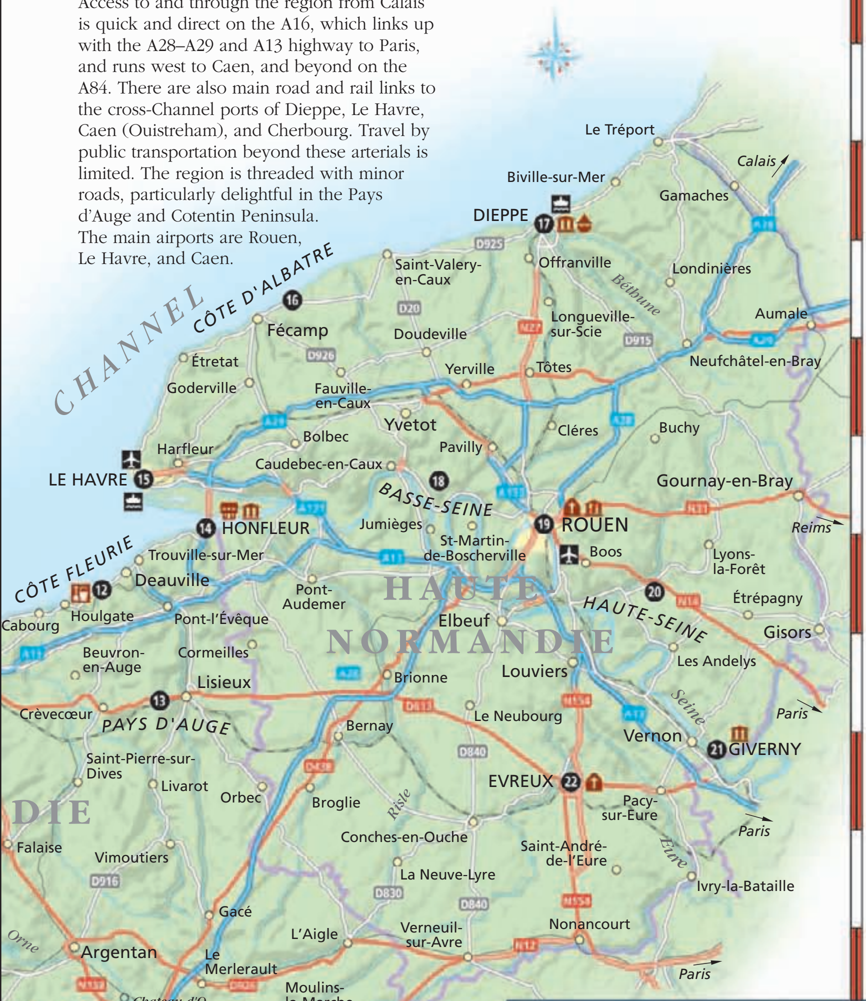
Avranches	⑤
Basse-Seine	⑱
Bayeux	⑧
Caen	⑨
Cherbourg	②
Côte d'Albâtre	⑯
Côte Fleurie	⑫
Côte de Nacre	⑦
Cotentin	①
Coutances	③
Dieppe	⑰
Évreux	㉒
Giverny	㉑
Granville	④
Haute-Seine	⑳
Honfleur	⑭
Le Havre	⑮
Mont-St-Michel	⑥
Parc Naturel Régional de Normandie-Maine	⑪
Pays d'Auge	⑬
Rouen	⑲
Suisse Normande	⑩

The Côte d'Albâtre coastline

For additional map symbols *see back flap*

GETTING AROUND

Access to and through the region from Calais is quick and direct on the A16, which links up with the A28–A29 and A13 highway to Paris, and runs west to Caen, and beyond on the A84. There are also main road and rail links to the cross-Channel ports of Dieppe, Le Havre, Caen (Ouistreham), and Cherbourg. Travel by public transportation beyond these arterials is limited. The region is threaded with minor roads, particularly delightful in the Pays d'Auge and Cotentin Peninsula. The main airports are Rouen, Le Havre, and Caen.



CHANNEL
CÔTE D'ALBATRE
CÔTE FLEURIE
Le Tréport
Calais
Biville-sur-Mer
Gamaches
DIEPPE
17
D925
Saint-Valery-en-Caux
Offranville
Londinières
Béthune
16
Fécamp
D20
Doudeville
N27
Longueville-sur-Scie
D915
Aumale
A28
A29
Neufchâtel-en-Bray
Étretat
D926
Yerville
Tôtes
Goderville
Fauville-en-Caux
A29
Yvetot
Cléres
A28
Buchy
Harfleur
Bolbec
Pavilly
LE HAVRE
15
Caudebec-en-Caux
18
A151
Gournay-en-Bray
N31
BASSE-SEINE
A131
HONFLEUR
14
Jumièges
19
ROUEN
Reims
St-Martin-de-Boscherville
Boos
Lyons-la-Forêt
Trouville-sur-Mer
A13
Deauville
12
Pont-Audemer
HAUTE
20
N14
Étrépagny
Cabourg
Houlgate
Pont-l'Évêque
Elbeuf
HAUTE-SEINE
Gisors
A13
Beuvron-en-Auge
Cormeilles
NORMANDIE
Les Andelys
A28
Lisieux
Brionne
Louviers
13
Crèvecœur
D613
Le Neubourg
N154
Seine
Paris
PAYS D'AUGE
Bernay
A13
Vernon
D840
21
GIVERNY
Saint-Pierre-sur-Dives
D438
EVREUX
22
Livarot
Orbec
Pacy-sur-Eure
DIE
Broglie
Risle
Paris
Conches-en-Ouche
Falaise
Vimoutiers
Saint-André-de-l'Eure
Eure
D916
La Neuve-Lyre
Ivry-la-Bataille
D830
D840
N154
Gacé
Nonancourt
Orne
L'Aigle
Verneuil-sur-Avre
Argentan
N12
Le Merlerault
Paris
N158
D926
Moulins-la-Marche
Chateau d'O
11
Mortrée
Courtomer
Tourouvre
Sées
NORMANDIE-MAINE
Mortagne-au-Perche
Lalacelle
N12
Le Mêle-sur-Sarthe
Alençon
Rémalard
A28
Mamers
D338
Bellême
Le Mans
0 kilometers 25
0 miles 25

The town of Les Andelys shrouded in mist

Rugged cliffs on the Cotentin Peninsula

Cotentin ❶

Manche. ✈ 🚆 🚌 ⛴ *Cherbourg.*
ℹ *2 quai Alexandre III (02 33 93 52 02).* **www**.manchetourisme.com

Thrusting into the English Channel, the Cotentin Peninsula has a landscape similar to Brittany's. Its long sandy beaches have wild and windblown headlands around Cap de la Hague and Nez de Jobourg. The latter is a worthwhile goal for bird-watchers – gannets and shearwaters fly by in large numbers. Along the east coast stretch the expansive sands of Utah Beach, where American troops landed as part of the Allied invasion on June 6, 1944. Inland, Ste-Mère-Eglise commemorates these events with its poignant **Musée Airborne** (Airborne Troops Museum). Just outside Ste-Mère-Eglise, the **Ferme Musée du Cotentin** has farm animals and activities which give an insight into rural life in the early 1900s, while farther north in the market town of Valognes the **Musée Régional du Cidre et du Calvados** celebrates the thriving local talent for making cider and Calvados.

Two fishing ports command the Peninsula's northeast corner: Barfleur and St-Vaast-la-Hougue, the latter famous for oysters and a base for boat trips to the Ile de Tatihou. The Val de Saire is ideal for a scenic drive, with a view point at La Pernelle the best place to survey the coast. On the west side of the Peninsula, warmed by the Gulf Stream, the resort of Barneville-Carteret offers sandy beaches and summer boat trips to the Channel Islands. The low-lying, marshy landscape east of Carentan forms the heart of the Parc Régional des Marais du Cotentin et du Bessin.

🏛 Musée Airborne
14 rue Eisenhower, Ste-Mère-Eglise.
Tel *02 33 41 41 35.* ○ *Feb–Nov: daily & Christmas hols.* ● *Dec–Jan.*
⊘ ♿ **www**.musee-airborne.com

🏛 Ferme Musée du Cotentin
Rte de Beauvais, Ste-Mère-Eglise.
Tel *02 33 95 40 20.* ○ *Jun–Sep: daily; Feb school vacations–May & Oct school vacations: daily pms.* ⊘

🏛 Musée Régional du Cidre et du Calvados
Rue du Petit-Versailles, Valognes. ***Tel*** *02 33 40 22 73.* ○ *Apr–Sep: Wed–Mon (Jul & Aug: daily).* ● *Sun am.* ⊘

Cherbourg ❷

Manche. 👥 *44,100.* ✈ 🚆 🚌
⛴ ℹ *2 quai Alexandre III (02 33 93 52 02).* ⊖ *Tue, Thu, & Sat.*
www.otcherbourgcotentin.fr

Cherbourg has been a strategic port and naval base since the mid-19th century. The French Navy still uses its harbors, as do transatlantic ships and cross-Channel ferries from England and Ireland. For a good view of the port, drive to the hilltop **Fort du Roule**, which houses the **Musée de la Libération**, recalling the D-Day invasion and the subsequent liberation of Cherbourg. Most activity is centered on the flower-filled market square, place Général de Gaulle, and along shopping streets such as rue Tour-Carrée and rue de la Paix. The fine art in the **Musée Thomas-Henry** includes 17th-century Flemish works, and portraits by Jean François Millet, born in Gréville-Hague. **Parc Emmanuel Liais** has small botanical gardens and a densely packed **Musée d'Histoire Naturelle**.

The **Cité de la Mer**, opened in 2002, has a cylindrical deep-sea aquarium, the world's largest visitable submarine, and many other wonders.

🏛 Musée de la Libération
Fort du Roule. ***Tel*** *02 33 20 14 12.*
○ *May–Sep: Mon pm–Sat & Sun pm; Oct– Apr: Wed–Sun pms.*
● *pub hols.* ⊘

🏛 Musée Thomas-Henry
Rue Vastel. ***Tel*** *02 33 23 39 30.*
○ *May–Sep: Mon pm–Sat & Sun pm; Oct–Apr: Wed–Sun pms.*
● *public hols.* ♿

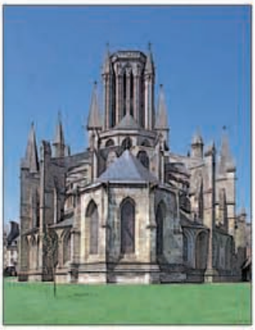
🏛 La Cité de la Mer
Gare Maritime Transatlantique.
Tel *02 33 20 26 69.* ○ *daily.*
● *Jan 1, 3 wks Jan, Dec 25.* ⊘
🍴 ☕ 🛍 **www**.citedelamer.com

Cherbourg town center

Coutances ❸

Manche. 👥 *11,500.* 🚆 🚌 ℹ
pl Georges Leclerc (02 33 19 08 10).
⊖ *Thu.* **www**.coutances.fr

From Roman times until the Revolution, the hilltop town of Coutances was the capital of the Cotentin. The slender **Cathédrale Notre-Dame**, a fine example of Norman Gothic architecture, has a soaring 217 ft (66 m) lantern tower. Founded in the 1040s by Bishop Geoffroi de Montbray, it was financed by the local de Hauteville family using monies gained in Sicily where they had founded a kingdom a few years earlier. The town was badly damaged during World War II but the cathedral, the churches of St. Nicholas and St. Peter, and the beautiful public gardens with their rare plants all survived.



The back of Coutances cathedral with its squat lantern tower

Granville ④

Manche. 👥 *13,500.* 🚆 🚌 ⛴
ℹ *4 cours Jonville (02 33 91 30 03).*
🛒 *Sat.* **www**.ville-granville.fr

Ramparts enclose the upper town of Granville, which sits on a spur overlooking the Baie du Mont-St-Michel. The walled town was developed from fortifications built by the English in 1439.

The **Musée de Vieux Granville**, in the town gatehouse, recounts Granville's long-seafaring tradition. The chapel walls of the **Eglise de Notre-Dame** are lined with tributes from local fishermen to their patroness, Notre-Dame du Cap Lihou.

The lower town is an old-fashioned seaside resort with a casino, promenades, and public gardens. From the port there are boat trips to the Iles Chausey, a scattering of low-lying granite islands.

Le Musée Christian Dior is housed in Les Rhumbs, the fashion designer's childhood home, surrounded by a beautiful cliff garden.

🏛 Musée de Vieux Granville

2 rue Le Carpentier.
Tel *02 33 50 44 10.* ○ *Apr–Sep; Wed–Mon; Oct– Mar: Wed, Sat & Sun pms.* ● *Nov 1, Dec 22–Jan.* ♿

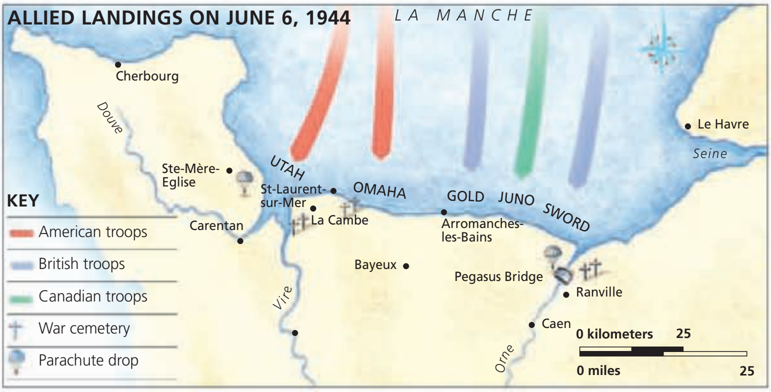
🏛 Musée Christian Dior

Villa les Rhumbs. ***Tel*** *02 33 61 48 21.* ○ *May–Sep: daily; gardens open all year.* ♿

D-DAY LANDINGS

In the early hours of June 6, 1944, Allied forces began landing on the shores of Normandy, the first step in a long-planned invasion of German-occupied France, known as Operation Overlord. Parachutists were dropped near Ste-Mère-Eglise and Pegasus Bridge, and seaborne assaults were made along a string of code-named beaches. U.S. troops landed on Utah and Omaha in the west, while British and Canadian troops, which included a contingent of Free French commandos, landed at Gold, Juno, and Sword. Over sixty years on, the beaches are still referred to by their code names. Pegasus Bridge, where the first French house was liberated, is a natural starting point for a tour around the sights and memorials. Farther west, evocative ruins of the artificial harbor towed across from England survive at Arromanches-les-Bains. There are British, German, and American war cemeteries at La Cambe, Ranville, and St-Laurent-sur-Mer. War museums at Bayeux, Caen, St-Mère-Eglise, and Cherbourg provide background on D-Day and the ensuing Battle for Normandy.

American troops coming ashore during the Allied invasion of France


ALLIED LANDINGS ON JUNE 6, 1944
LA MANCHE
Cherbourg
Douve
Ste-Mère-Eglise
UTAH
St-Laurent-sur-Mer
OMAHA
La Cambe
Carentan
GOLD
JUNO
SWORD
Arromanches-les-Bains
Bayeux
Pegasus Bridge
Ranville
Caen
Vire
Orne
Le Havre
Seine
KEY
American troops
British troops
Canadian troops
War cemetery
Parachute drop
0 kilometers 25
0 miles 25

By the end of D-Day, over 135,000 men had been brought ashore, with losses totaling around 10,000.

Avranches ❺

Manche. 👥 *9,500.* 🚆 🚌 ℹ *2 rue Général-de-Gaulle (02 33 58 00 22).* 🛒 *Sat.* **www**.ot-avranches.com

Avranches has been a religious center since the 6th century and is the final staging-post for visitors to the abbey on Mont-St-Michel. The origins of the famous abbey lie in a vision experienced by Aubert, the Bishop of Avranches. One night in 708 the Archangel Michael instructed him to build a church on the nearby island. Aubert's skull, with the finger-hole made in it by the angel, can be seen in the treasury of **St-Gervais** in Avranches. The best views of Mont-St-Michel are from the **Jardin des Plantes**. After the Revolution, 203 illuminated manuscripts were rescued from Mont-St-Michel's abbey. These and many others are held in the **Musée des Manuscrits du Mont-St-Michel**. The **Musée d'Art et d'Histoire** details life in the Cotentin over the centuries, with a collection devoted to representations of Mont-St-Michel. Just outside town is the **Musée de la Seconde Guerre Mondiale**.

🏛 Musée des Manuscrits du Mont-St-Michel
Pl d'Estouteville. ***Tel*** *02 33 79 57 00.*
○ *Tue–Sun (Jul–Aug: daily).* ● *Jan, May 1, Nov 1, Dec 25.* ♿

🏛 Musée d'Art et d'Histoire
Place Jean de Saint-Avit. ○ *daily.*
● *Feb–May, Oct–Dec: Mon.* ♿

Remains of Mulberry Harbor from World War II off the Côte de Nacre

Mont-St-Michel ❻

See pp256–9.

Côte de Nacre ❼

Calvados. ✈ *Caen.* 🚆 🚌 *Caen, Bayeux.* ⛴ *Caen-Ouistreham.* ℹ *pl St-Pierre, Caen (02 31 27 14 14).* 🛒 *Sun.* **www**.ville-caen.fr

The stretch of coast between the mouths of the rivers Orne and Vire was dubbed the Côte de Nacre (Mother of Pearl Coast) in the 19th century. More recently it has become known as the site of the D-Day Landings when Allied troops poured ashore at the start of Operation Overlord *(see p251)*. The associated cemeteries, memorials, and museums, and the remnants of the Mulberry Harbor at Arromanches-les-Bains, provide focal points for a visit. However, the coastline is equally popular as a summer vacation destination, offering long, sandy beaches backed by seaside resorts such as Courseulles-sur-Mer and Luc-sur-Mer, which are more relaxed than the resorts of the Côte Fleurie farther east.

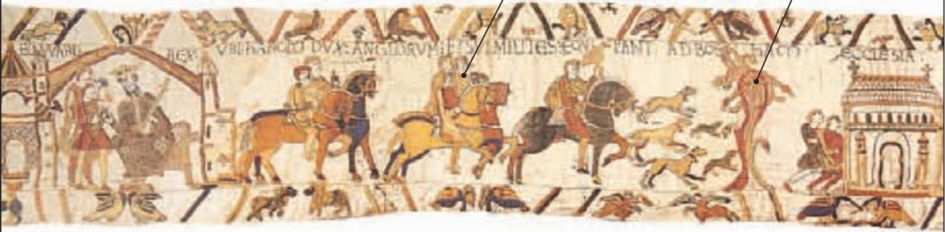
Bayeux ❽

Calvados. 👥 *15,500.* 🚆 🚌 ℹ *Pont-St-Jean (02 31 51 28 28).* 🛒 *Sat, Wed.* **www**.bayeux-bessin-tourism.com

Bayeux was the first town to be liberated by the Allies in 1944 and fortunate to escape war damage. Today, an attractive nucleus of 15th–19th-century buildings remains

BAYEUX TAPESTRY

A lively comic strip justifying William the Conqueror's invasion of England, this 230-ft (70-m) long embroidered hanging was commissioned by Bishop Odo of Bayeux. Offering insights into 11th-century life and an action-packed account of Harold, King of England's defeat at the Battle of Hastings, the tapestry is valued as a work of art, a historical document, an early example of spin, and an entertaining read.



Harold's retinue sets off for France to inform William that he will succeed to the English throne.

Trees with interlacing branches are sometimes used to divide the tapestry's 58 scenes.

around its central main streets, rue St-Martin and rue St-Jean. The latter is lined with stores and cafés.

Above the town rise the spires and domed lantern tower of the Gothic **Cathédrale Notre-Dame**. Beneath its interior is an 11th-century crypt decorated with restored 15th-century frescoes of angels playing musical instruments. The original Romanesque church that stood here was consecrated in 1077, and it is likely that Bayeux's famous tapestry was commissioned for this occasion by one of its key characters, Bishop Odo.

The tapestry is displayed in a renovated seminary, **Centre Guillaume-le-Conquérant-Tapisserie de Bayeux**, which gives a detailed audiovisual explanation of events leading up to the Norman conquest. On the southwest side of the town, the restored **Musée Mémorial de la Bataille de Normandie** traces the events of the Battle of Normandy in World War II, with an excellent film compilation made from contemporary newsreels.

🏛 Centre Guillaume-le-Conquérant-Tapisserie
Rue de Nesmond. ***Tel*** *02 31 51 25 50.* ○ *daily.* ● *Jan 1–2 , Dec 25–26.* 🎧 ♿

🏛 Musée Mémorial de la Bataille de Normandie
Bd Fabian-Ware. ***Tel*** *02 31 51 46 90.* ○ *daily.* ● *Jan 1, last 2 weeks Jan, Dec 25–26.* 🎧 ♿

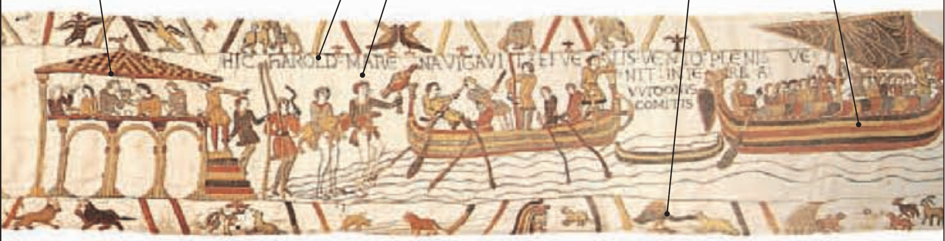
The Abbaye aux Hommes in Caen

Caen ⑨

Calvados. 👥 *117,200.* ✈ 🚆 🚌 ⛴
ℹ *pl St-Pierre (02 31 27 14 14).*
🛒 *Fri & Sun.* **www**.ville-caen.fr

In the mid-11th century Caen became the favored residence of William the Conqueror and Queen Matilda, and despite the destruction of three-quarters of the city during World War II, much remains of their creation. The monarchs built two great abbeys and a castle on the north bank of the river Orne, bequeathing Caen a core of historic interest that justifies penetrating its industrial estates and postwar housing.

Much-loved by the citizens of Caen, the **Eglise St-Pierre** was built on the south side of the castle in the 13th–14th centuries, with an impressively ornate Renaissance east end added in the early 16th century. The frequently copied 14th-century belltower was destroyed in 1944 but has now been restored. To the east, rue du Vaugeux is the central street in Caen's small Vieux Quartier (Old Quarter). Now pedestrianized, the street still has some lovely half-timbered buildings. A walk west, along rue St-Pierre or boulevard du Maréchal Leclerc, leads to the city's main shopping district.



The English have a last meal on land before boarding with hunting dogs and falcons.

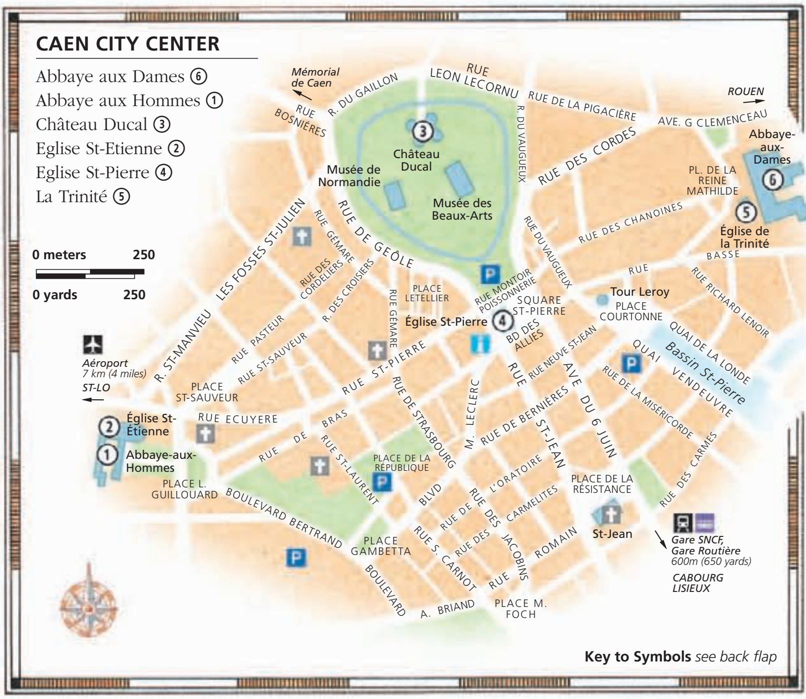
Wide moustaches distinguish the English characters from the clean-shaven Normans.

The colored wool used to embroider the linen has faded little since the 11th century.

Latin inscriptions caption each main scene in the work and embody the heroic ideals shared by all the participants.

Borders provide wry comment through fables and asides.

HIC HAROLD MARE NAVIGAVIT ET VELIS VENTO PLENIS VENIT IN TERRA WIDONIS COMITIS


CAEN CITY CENTER
Abbaye aux Dames ⑥
Abbaye aux Hommes ①
Château Ducal ③
Eglise St-Etienne ②
Eglise St-Pierre ④
La Trinité ⑤
0 meters 250
0 yards 250
Mémorial de Caen
RUE BOSNIÈRES
R. DU GAILLON
RUE LEON LECORNU
R. DU VAUGUEUX
RUE DE LA PIGACIÈRE
ROUEN
AVE. G CLEMENCEAU
Abbaye-aux-Dames
Château Ducal
Musée de Normandie
Musée des Beaux-Arts
RUE DES CORDES
PL. DE LA REINE MATHILDE
Église de la Trinité
RUE DES CHANOINES
RUE BASSE
LES FOSSES ST-JULIEN
RUE GÉMARE
RUE DE GEÔLE
RUE DES CORDELIERS
R. DES CROISIERS
PLACE LETELLIER
RUE GÉMARE
RUE MONTOIR POISSONNERIE
SQUARE ST-PIERRE
RUE DU VAUGUEUX
Tour Leroy
PLACE COURTONNE
RUE RICHARD LENOIR
QUAI DE LA LONDE
Bassin St-Pierre
QUAI VENDEUVRE
Église St-Pierre
BD DES ALLIES
R. ST-MANVIEU
RUE PASTEUR
RUE ST-SAUVEUR
Aéroport 7 km (4 miles)
ST-LO
PLACE ST-SAUVEUR
RUE ST-PIERRE
RUE NEUVE ST-JEAN
AVE DU 6 JUIN
RUE DE LA MISÉRICORDE
Église St-Étienne
RUE ECUYERE
Abbaye-aux-Hommes
RUE DE BRAS
RUE ST-LAURENT
RUE DE STRASBOURG
M. LECLERC
RUE DE BERNIÈRES
RUE ST-JEAN
PLACE L. GUILLOUARD
PLACE DE LA RÉPUBLIQUE
BLVD
RUE DE L'ORATOIRE
PLACE DE LA RÉSISTANCE
RUE DES CARMES
BOULEVARD BERTRAND
RUE DES CARMELITES
RUE DES JACOBINS
St-Jean
Gare SNCF, Gare Routière 600m (650 yards)
CABOURG LISIEUX
PLACE GAMBETTA
RUES. CARNOT
RUE ROMAIN
BOULEVARD A. BRIAND
PLACE M. FOCH
Key to Symbols see back flap

Abbaye-aux-Hommes

Esplanade Jean-Marie Louvel. **Tel** *02 31 30 42 81.* ○ *daily.* ● *Jan 1, May 1, Dec 25.* ✋ ♿ *restr.* ☞ *oblig.*

Work began on William's Abbey for Men in 1063 and was almost complete by his death 20 years later. The abbey church, **Eglise St-Etienne**, is a masterpiece of Norman Romanesque, with a severe, unadorned west front crowned with 13th-century spires. The sparingly decorated nave was roofed in the early 12th century with stone vaulting that anticipates the Gothic style.

Abbaye-aux-Dames

Pl de la Reine Mathilde. **Tel** *02 31 06 98 98.* ○ *daily.* ● *Jan 1, May 1, Dec 25.* ☞ *oblig.* ♿

Like William's Abbaye-aux-Hommes, Matilda's Abbey for Women also has a Norman Romanesque church, **La Trinité**, flanked by 18th-century buildings. Begun in 1060, it was consecrated six years later. Queen Matilda lies buried in the choir under a slab of black marble, and her beautifully restored abbey, with its creamy Caen stone, makes a serene, dignified mausoleum.

Château Ducal

Esplanade du Château. **Musée des Beaux Arts** **Tel** *02 31 30 47 70.* ○ *Wed–Mon.* **Musée de Normandie** **Tel** *02 31 30 47 50.* ○ *Oct–May: Wed–Mon; Jun–Sep: daily.* ● *Jan 1, Easter, May 1, Ascension, Nov 1, Dec 25 (both museums).* ♿

The ruins of Caen's castle, one of the largest fortified enclosures in Europe, offer spacious lawns, museums, and rampart views. A fine art collection, strong on 17th-century French and Italian painting, is exhibited in the **Musée des Beaux Arts**. The **Musée de Normandie** recalls traditional life in the region with utensils and displays on farming and lace.

Mémorial de Caen

Esplanade Dwight-Eisenhower. **Tel** *02 31 06 06 44.* ○ *mid-Jan–Dec: daily.* ● *2 weeks in Jan, Dec 25.* ✋ ♿ **www**.memorial-caen.fr

In the northwest of Caen, close to the N13 ring-road (exit 7), Mémorial is a museum dedicated to peace, placing the events of D-Day into the context of World War II using a host of interactive and audiovisual techniques, including stunning compilations of archive and fictional film.

A recent extension gives a wider perspective on cultural, religious, border, and ecological conflicts in the second half of the 20th century.

Lush Orne valley in the Suisse Normande

Suisse Normande ⑩

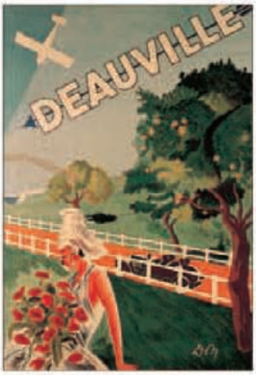
Calvados & Orne. ✈ *Caen.* 🚆 🚌 *Caen, Argentan.* **i** *2 pl St-Sauveur, Thury-Harcourt (02 31 79 70 45).* **www**.ot-suisse-normande.com

Though hardly like the mountains of Switzerland, the cliffs and valleys carved out by the river Orne as it winds north to Caen have become popular for walking, climbing, camping, and river sports. The area is also ideal for a rural drive. Its highest and most impressive point is the Oëtre Rock, off the D329, where you can look down over the dramatic gorges created by the river Rouvre.

Parc Naturel Régional de Normandie-Maine ⑪

Orne & Manche. ✈ *Alençon.* 🚆 🚌 *Argentan.* **i** *Carrouges (02 33 27 40 62).* **www**.parc-naturel-normandie-maine.fr

The southern fringes of central Normandy have been incorporated into France's largest regional park. Among the farmland and forests of oak and beech are several small towns. **Domfront** rests on a spur overlooking the river Varenne. The spa town **Bagnoles-de-l'Orne** offers a casino and sports facilities, while **Sées** has a Gothic cathedral. The **Maison du Parc** at Carrouges has information on walks, bicycling, and canoeing.



Poster of Deauville, about 1930

Maison du Parc
Carrouges. ***Tel*** *02 33 81 13 33.*
○ *Oct–May: Tue–Fri; Jun–Sep: Tue–Sun.* ● *public hols.*

Environs

Just north of the park is the **Chateau d'O**, a Renaissance château with fine 17th-century frescoes. The **Haras du Pin** is France's national stud, called "a horses' Versailles" for its 17th-century architecture. Horse shows, dressage events, and various tours take place throughout the year.

Côte Fleurie ⑫

Calvados. ✈ 🚆 🚌 *Deauville.* **i** *pl de la Mairie, Deauville (02 31 14 40 00).* **www**.deauville.org

The Côte Fleurie (Flowery Coast) between Villerville and Cabourg has been planted with chic resorts which burst into bloom every summer. **Trouville** was once a humble fishing village, but in the mid-19th century caught the attention of writers Gustave Flaubert and Alexandre Dumas. By the 1870s Trouville had acquired grand hotels, a train station, and pseudo-Swiss villas along the beachfront. It has, however, long been outclassed by its neighbor, **Deauville**, created by the Duc de Morny in the 1860s. This resort boasts a casino, racecourses, marinas, and the famous beachside catwalk, Les Planches.

For something quieter, head west to smaller resorts such as Villers-sur-Mer or Houlgate. **Cabourg** farther west is dominated by the turn-of-the-century Grand Hôtel *(see p551)* where novelist Marcel Proust spent many summers. Proust used the resort as a model for the fictional Balbec in his novel *Remembrance of Things Past.*

Pays d'Auge ⑬

Calvados. ✈ *Deauville.* 🚆 🚌 *Lisieux.* **i** *11 rue d'Alençon, Lisieux (02 31 48 18 10).* **www**.lisieux-tourisme.com

Inland from the Côte Fleurie, the Pays d'Auge is classic Normandy countryside, lushly woven with fields, wooded valleys, cider orchards, dairy farms and manor houses. Its capital is **Lisieux**, a cathedral town devoted to Ste-Thérèse of Lisieux, canonized in 1925, who attracts hundreds of thousands of pilgrims each year. Lisieux is an obvious base for exploring the region, but nearby market towns, such as St-Pierre-sur-Dives and Orbec, are smaller and more attractive.

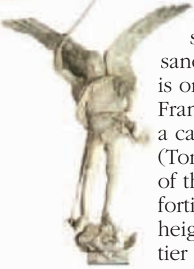
The best way to enjoy the Pays d'Auge is to mosey around its minor roads. Two tourist routes are devoted to cider and cheese, while picturesque manor houses, farmhouses, and châteaus testify to the wealth of this fertile land. **St-Germain-de-Livet** can be visited, as can **Crèvecoeur-en-Auge**, and the half-timbered village of **Beuvron-en-Auge** is charming.

APPLES AND CIDER

Apple orchards are a familiar feature of the Normandy countryside, and their fruit a fundamental ingredient in the region's gastronomic repertoire. No self-respecting pâtisserie would be without its *tarte normande* (apple tart), and every country lane seems to sport an *Ici Vente Cidre* (cider sold here) sign. Much of the harvest forms the raw material for cider and Calvados, an apple brandy aged in oak barrels for at least two years. A local brew is also made from pears, and known as *poiré* (perry).

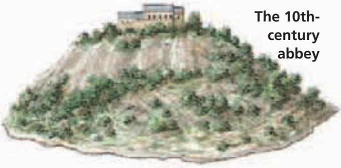
A crop ranging from sour cider apples to sweet eating varieties

Mont-St-Michel ❻

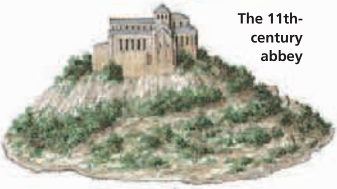


St Michael

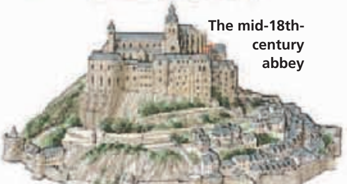
Shrouded by mist, encircled by sea, soaring proud above glistening sands – the silhouette of Mont-St-Michel is one of the most enchanting sights in France. Now linked to the mainland by a causeway, the island of Mont-Tombe (Tomb on the Hill) stands at the mouth of the river Couesnon, crowned by a fortified abbey that almost doubles its height. Lying strategically on the frontier between Normandy and Brittany, Mont-St-Michel grew from a humble 8th-century oratory to become a Benedictine monastery that had its greatest influence in the 12th and 13th centuries. Pilgrims known as *miquelots* journeyed from afar to honor the cult of St. Michael, and the monastery was a renowned center of medieval learning. Major engineering works are now in place to begin reversing the silting up of the sea around the island.



The 10th-century abbey



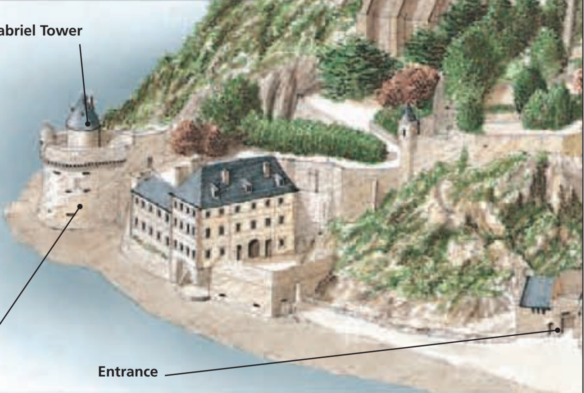
The 11th-century abbey



The mid-18th-century abbey

St-Aubert's Chapel
A small 15th-century chapel built on an outcrop of rock is dedicated to Aubert, the founder of Mont-St-Michel.

★ Ramparts
English attacks during the Hundred Years' War led to the construction of fortified walls with imposing towers.



TIMELINE

966 Benedictine abbey founded by Duke Richard I

1211–28 Construction of La Merveille

1434 Last assault by English forces. Ramparts surround the town

1789 French Revolution: abbey becomes a political prison

1874 Abbey declared a national monument

1922 Services again held in abbey church

700 | 1000 | 1300 | 1600 | 1900

1017 Work on abbey church starts

708 St Aubert builds an oratory on Mont-Tombe

1067–70 Mont-St-Michel depicted in Bayeux Tapestry

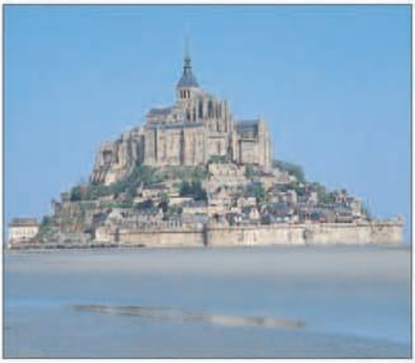
1516 Abbey falls into decline

Bayeux Tapestry detail

1877–9 Causeway built

1895–7 Belfry, spire, and statue of St. Michael added

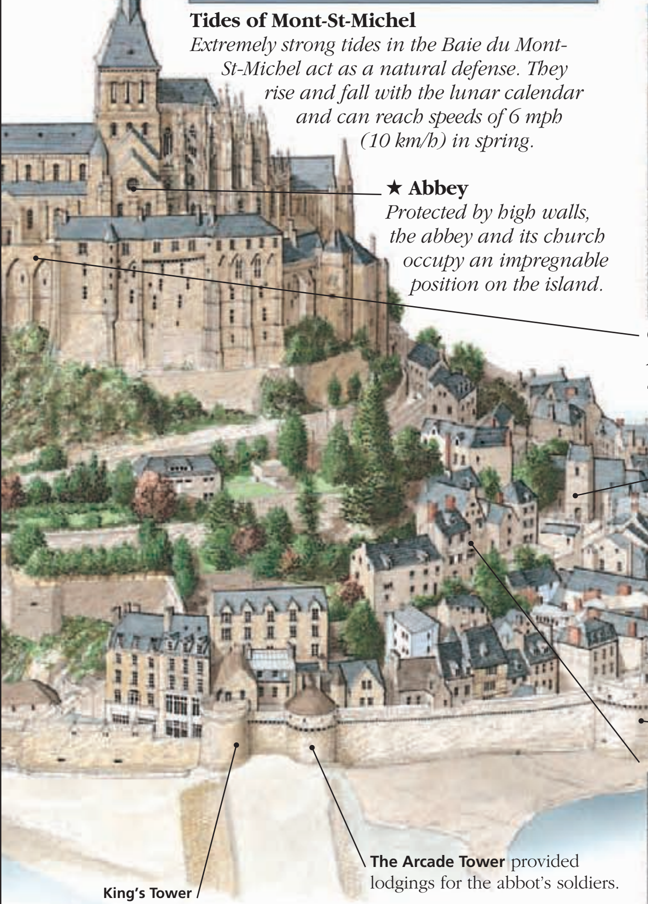
2007 Benedictine monks leave abbey; they are replaced by the Fraternité de Jérusalem



VISITORS' CHECKLIST

🚉 *to Pontorson, then bus.* ℹ *bd de l'Avancée (02 33 60 14 30).* **www**.ot-montsaintmichel.com **Abbey** ***Tel*** *02 33 89 80 00.* ○ *May–Aug: 9am–7pm; Sep–Apr: 9:30am– 6pm. Nocturnal visits in summer (recommended).* ● *Jan 1, May 1, Nov 1 & 11, Dec 25.* ♿ ✝ *12:15pm Tue–Sat, 11:30am Sun.* 📷 ☞ **www**.monuments-nationaux.fr

Tides of Mont-St-Michel
Extremely strong tides in the Baie du Mont-St-Michel act as a natural defense. They rise and fall with the lunar calendar and can reach speeds of 6 mph (10 km/h) in spring.



★ Abbey
Protected by high walls, the abbey and its church occupy an impregnable position on the island.

Gautier's Leap
At the top of the Inner Staircase, this terrace is named after a prisoner who leaped to his death.

Eglise St-Pierre

Liberty Tower

The Arcade Tower provided lodgings for the abbot's soldiers.

King's Tower

★ Grande Rue
Now crowded with restaurants, the pilgrims' route, followed since the 12th century, climbs up past Eglise St-Pierre to the abbey gates.

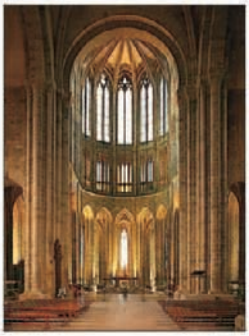
STAR FEATURES

- ★ Abbey
- ★ Ramparts
- ★ Grande Rue

The Abbey of Mont-St-Michel

Cross in the choir

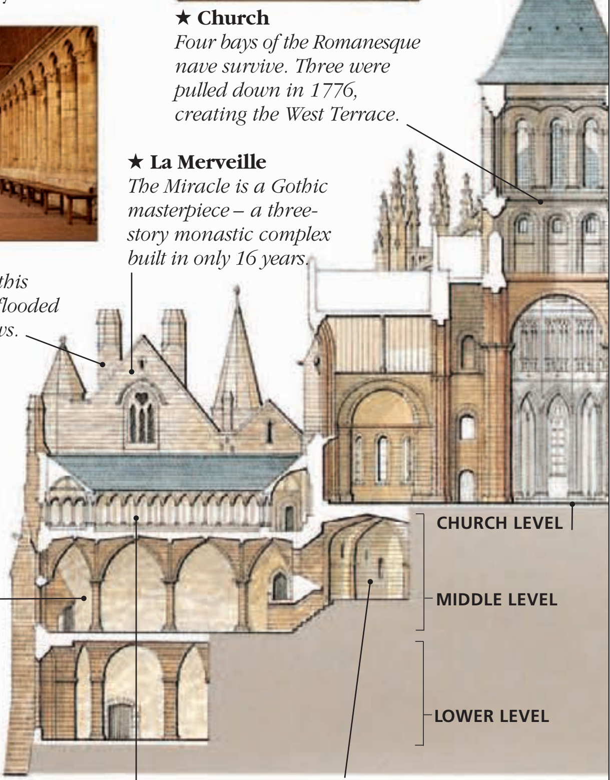
The present buildings bear witness to the time when the abbey served both as a Benedictine monastery and, for 73 years after the Revolution, as a political prison. In 1017 work began on a Romanesque church at the island's highest point, building over its 10th-century predecessor, now the Chapel of Our Lady Underground. A monastery built on three levels, La Merveille (The Miracle) was added to the church's north side in the early 13th century.



★ Church
Four bays of the Romanesque nave survive. Three were pulled down in 1776, creating the West Terrace.

Refectory
The monks ate their meals in this long, narrow room, which is flooded with light through tall windows.

★ La Merveille
The Miracle is a Gothic masterpiece – a three-story monastic complex built in only 16 years.



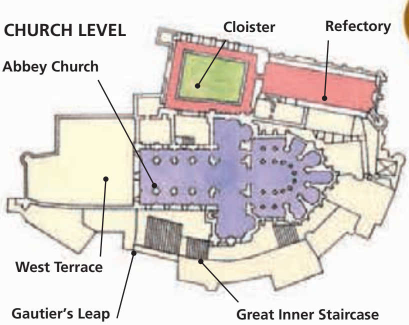
Knights' Room
The rib vaults and finely decorated capitals are typically Gothic.

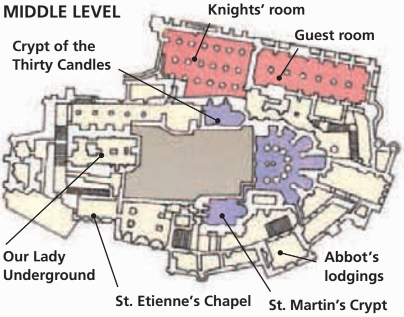
Crypt of the Thirty Candles is one of two 11th-century crypts built to support the transepts of the main church.

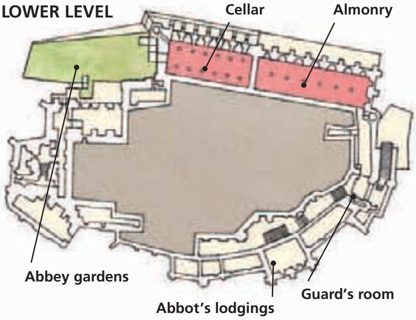
★ Cloisters
The cloisters with their elegant columns in staggered rows are a beautiful example of early 13th-century Anglo-Norman style.

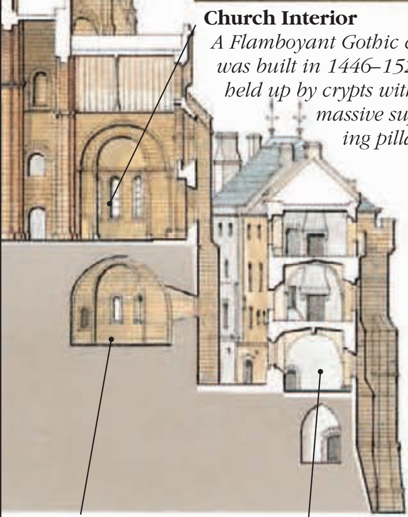
VISITING THE ABBEY

The three levels of the abbey reflect the monastic hierarchy. The monks lived at the highest level, in an enclosed world of church, cloister, and refectory. The abbot entertained his noble guests on the middle level. Soldiers and pilgrims farther down on the social scale were received at the lowest level. Guided tours begin at the West Terrace at the church level and end in the almonry, where alms were dispensed to the poor. The almonry is now a bookstore and souvenir hall.


CHURCH LEVEL
Cloister
Refectory
Abbey Church
West Terrace
Gautier's Leap
Great Inner Staircase


MIDDLE LEVEL
Knights' room
Guest room
Crypt of the Thirty Candles
Our Lady Underground
Abbot's lodgings
St. Etienne's Chapel
St. Martin's Crypt


LOWER LEVEL
Cellar
Almonry
Abbey gardens
Guard's room
Abbot's lodgings



Church Interior
A Flamboyant Gothic choir was built in 1446–1521, held up by crypts with massive supporting pillars.

St-Martin's Crypt is an 11th-century barrel-vaulted chapel that preserves the austere forms of the original Romanesque abbey.

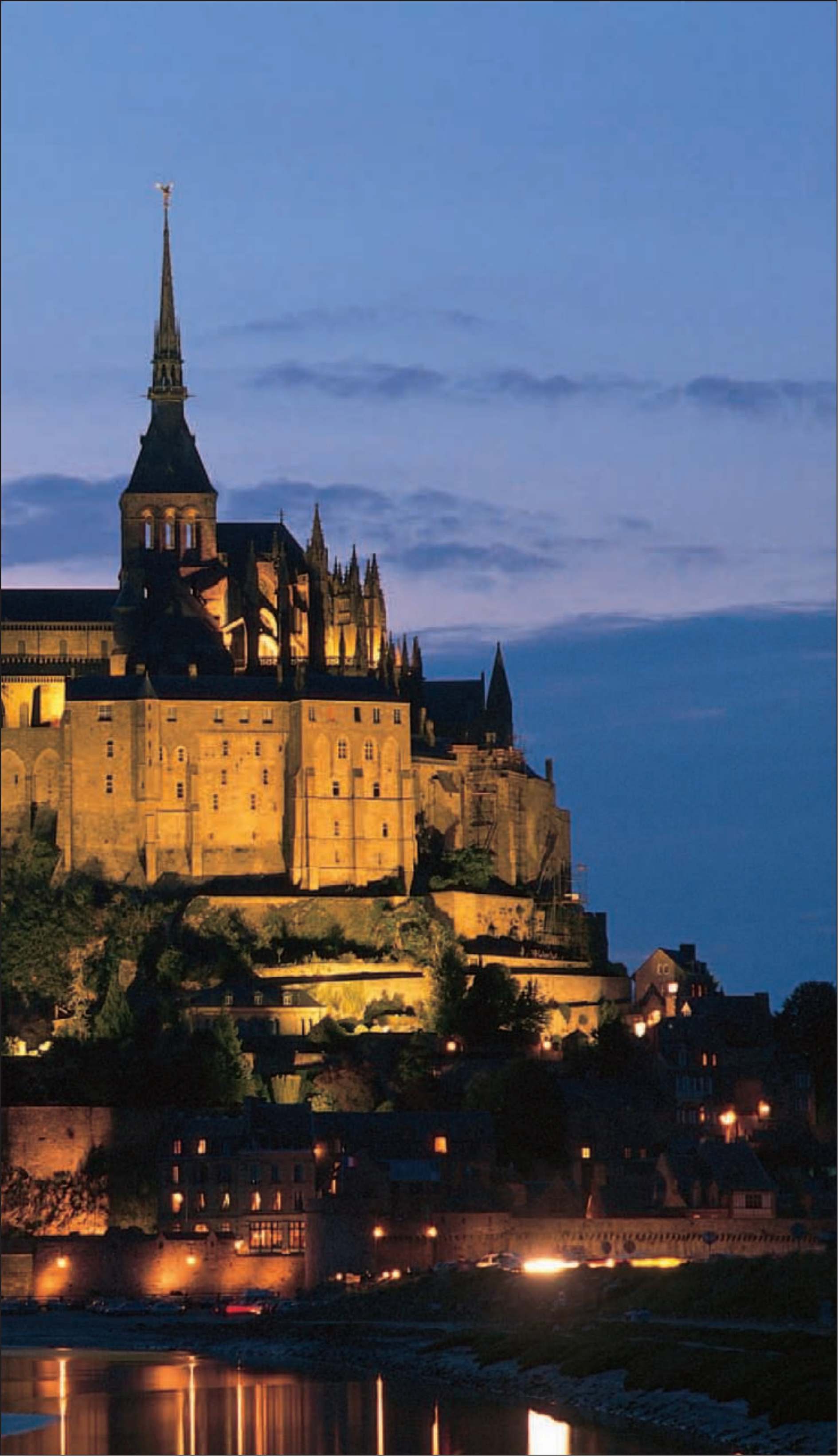
The abbot's lodgings were close to the abbey entrance, and he received prestigious visitors in the guest room. Poorer pilgrims were received in the almonry.

West Terrace
Guided tours start here, at the West Terrace. The Fraternité de Jérusalem, a small monastic community, lives in the abbey and welcomes visitors.

STAR FEATURES

- ★ Church
- ★ La Merveille
- ★ Cloisters

Mont-St-Michel by night ▷



Honfleur ⑭

Calvados. 👥 8,500. 🚌 *Deauville.*
ℹ *quai Lepaulmier (02 31 89 23 30).*
🛒 *Wed, Thu, Sat, Sun.*
www.ot-honfleur.fr

A major defensive port in the 15th century, Honfleur has become one of Normandy's most appealing harbors. At its heart is the 17th-century **Vieux Bassin** (Old Dock), with its pretty tall houses (6-7 storys).

Honfleur became a center of artistic activity in the 19th century. Eugène Boudin, the painter, was born here in 1824, as was the composer Erik Satie in 1866. Courbet, Sisley, Renoir, Pissarro, and Cézanne all visited Honfleur, often meeting at the Ferme St-Siméon, now a luxury hotel. Painters still work from Honfleur's quayside, and exhibit in the **Greniers à Sel**, two salt warehouses built in 1670. These lie to the east of the Vieux Bassin in an area known as l'Enclos, which made up the fortified heart of the town in the 13th-century.

The **Musée d'Ethnographie et d'Art Populaire Normand** displays mementos of Honfleur's nautical past, with a warren of Norman interiors next door in the former prison. Place Ste-Catherine has an unusual 15th-century church built by ship's carpenters. The **Musée Eugène-Boudin** documents the artistic appeal of Honfleur and the Seine estuary, with works from Boudin to Raoul Dufy. **Les Maisons Satie** use extracts from Satie's music to guide you round reconstructions of the rooms.

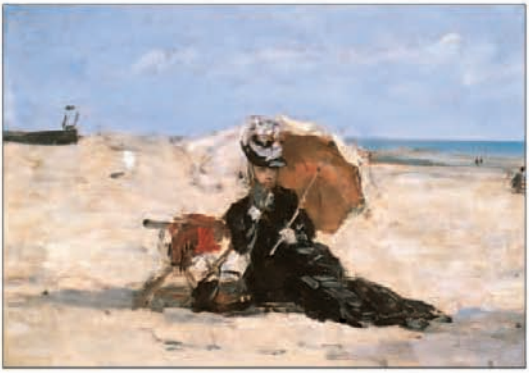
🏪 Greniers à Sel
Rue de la Ville. ℹ *02 31 89 23 30.*
○ *for guided tours & exhibitions.*
🚶 *obligatory, except during summer exhibs.* 🎟 ♿

🏛 Musée d'Ethnographie et d'Art Populaire Normand
Quai St Etienne. ***Tel** 02 31 89 14 12.*
○ *mid-Feb–Mar, Oct–mid-Nov: Tue–Fri (pms only), Sat, Sun; Apr–Sep: Tue–Sun.* ● *May 1.* 🎟 ♿

🏛 Musée Eugène-Boudin
Pl Erik Satie, rue de l'Homme de Bois. ***Tel** 02 31 89 54 00.*
○ *mid-Mar–Sep: Wed–Mon; Oct–Dec & mid-Feb–mid-Mar: Wed–Mon pms, Sat, Sun.*
● *May 1, Jul 14, Dec 25.*
🎟 ♿

🏛 Les Maisons Satie
67 bd Charles V. ***Tel** 02 31 89 11 11.*
○ *Wed–Mon.* ● *Jan–mid-Feb.* 🎟

Quai St-Etienne in Honfleur



Woman with Parasol **(1880) by Boudin in the Musée Eugène-Boudin**

Le Havre ⑮

Seine-Maritime. 👥 *194,000.* ✈ 🚆 🚌 ⛴ ℹ *186 bd Clemenceau (02 32 74 04 04).* 🛒 *daily.*
www.lehavretourisme.com

Strategically positioned on the Seine estuary, Le Havre (The Harbor) was created in 1517 by François I after the nearby port of Harfleur silted up. During World War II it was virtually obliterated by Allied bombing, but despite a vast industrial zone which stands beside the port, it still has appeal. It is an important yachting center, and its beach has two blue flags (very clean!).

Much of the city center was rebuilt in the 1950s–1960s by August Perret, whose towering **Eglise St-Joseph** (a UNESCO World Heritage site) pierces the skyline. On the seafront, the **Musée Malraux** has works by, among others, local artist Raoul Dufy. France's biggest skateboard park is also on the seafront.

🏛 Musée Malraux
2 bd Clemenceau. ***Tel** 02 35 19 62 62.* ○ *Wed–Mon.* ● *public hols.* 🎟

Côte d'Albâtre ⑯

Seine-Maritime. 🚆 🚌 ⛴ ℹ *quai du Carénage, Dieppe (02 32 14 40 60).*
www.dieppetourisme.com

The Alabaster Coast gets its name from the chalky cliffs and milky waters that characterize the Normandy coastline between Le Havre and Le Tréport. It is best known for the **Falaise d'Aval** west of Etretat, eroded into an arch. The author Guy de Maupassant, born near Dieppe in 1850, compared these cliffs to an elephant dipping its trunk into the sea. From Etretat, a chain of coastal roads runs east across a switchback of breezy headlands and wooded valleys to Dieppe.

Fécamp is the only major town along this route. Its Benedictine abbey was once an important pilgrimage center after a tree trunk said to contain drops of Christ's Blood washed ashore here in the 7th century. This is enshrined in a reliquary at the entrance to the Lady Chapel of the abbey church, La Trinité.

The vast **Palais Bénédictine** is a Neo-Gothic-and-Renaissance homage to the ego of Alexander Le Grand, a local wine and spirits merchant who rediscovered the monks' recipe for Bénédictine, the famous herbal liqueur. Built

The cliffs at Falaise d'Aval, famously likened to an elephant dipping its trunk into the sea

in 1882, it incorporates a distillery and an eccentric museum packed with curios. The adjacent halls provide an aromatic account and tastings of the 27 herbs and spices that make up the elixir.

🏛 **Palais Bénédictine**
110 rue Alexandre Le Grand, Fécamp.
Tel *02 35 10 26 10.* ○ *daily.*
● *Jan, May 1, Dec 25.* 📷 🛍

View of Dieppe from the château and museum above the town

Dieppe ⑰

Seine-Maritime. 👥 *36,000.* 🚆 🚌
⛴ ℹ *quai du Carénage (02 32 14 40 60).* ☂ *Tue, Thu, & especially Sat.*
www.dieppetourisme.com

Dieppe exploits a break in the chalky cliffs bordering the Pays de Caux, and has won historical prestige as a Channel fort, port, and resort. Prosperity came during the 16th and 17th centuries, when local privateer Jehan Ango raided the Portuguese and English fleets, and a trading post called Petit Dieppe was founded on the West African coast. At that time, Dieppe's population was already 30,000, and included a 300-strong community of craftsmen carving imported ivory. This maritime past is celebrated in **Le Château-Musée**, the 15th-century castle crowning the headland to the west of the seafront. Here you can see historical maps and model ships, a collection of Dieppe ivories, and paintings that evoke the town's development as a fashionable seaside resort during the 19th century. Dieppe had the nearest beach to Paris and it quickly responded to the developing passion for promenading, seawater cures, and bathing.

Today Dieppe's broad seafront is given over to lawns, seaside amusements, and parking lots, and its liveliest streets surround the battle-scarred **Eglise St-Jacques** to the south. If the weather is poor, visit **L'Estran-La Cité de la Mer**, an exhibition center with maritime models.

🏛 **Le Château-Musée**
Tel *02 35 06 61 99.* ○ *Jun–Sep: daily; Oct–May: Wed–Mon.*
● *Jan 1, May 1, Nov 1, Dec 25.* 📷
🛍 **www**.mairie-dieppe.fr

🏛 **L'Estran-La Cité de la Mer**
37 rue de l'Asile Thomas.
Tel *02 35 06 93 20.* ○ *daily.*
● *Jan 1, Dec 25.* 📷 ♿

Basse-Seine ⑱

Seine-Maritime & Eure. ✈ *Le Havre, Rouen.* 🚆 🚌 *Yvetot.* ⛴ *Le Havre.*
ℹ *Yvetot (02 35 95 08 40).*

Meandering seaward from Rouen to Le Havre, the river Seine is crossed by three spectacular road bridges: the Pont de Brotonne, the Pont de Tancarville, and the Pont de Normandie (completed in 1995, it links Le Havre and Honfleur). The grace and daring of these modern bridges echo the soaring aspirations of the abbeys founded on the river's banks in the 7th and 8th centuries. The abbeys now provide good stepping stones for a tour of the Lower Seine valley.

West of Rouen is the harmonious Eglise de St-Georges at **St-Martin-de-Boscherville** which, until the Revolution, was the church of a small walled abbey. Its 12th-century chapter house has remarkable biblical statues and carved capitals. From here the D67 runs south to the riverside village of La Bouille.

As you head northwest, an hourly car ferry at Mesnil-sous-Jumièges takes you over to the colossal ruins of the **Abbaye de Jumièges**. The abbey was founded in 654 and once housed 900 monks and 1,500 servants. The main abbey church dates from the 11th century; its consecration in 1067 was a major event, with William the Conqueror in attendance.

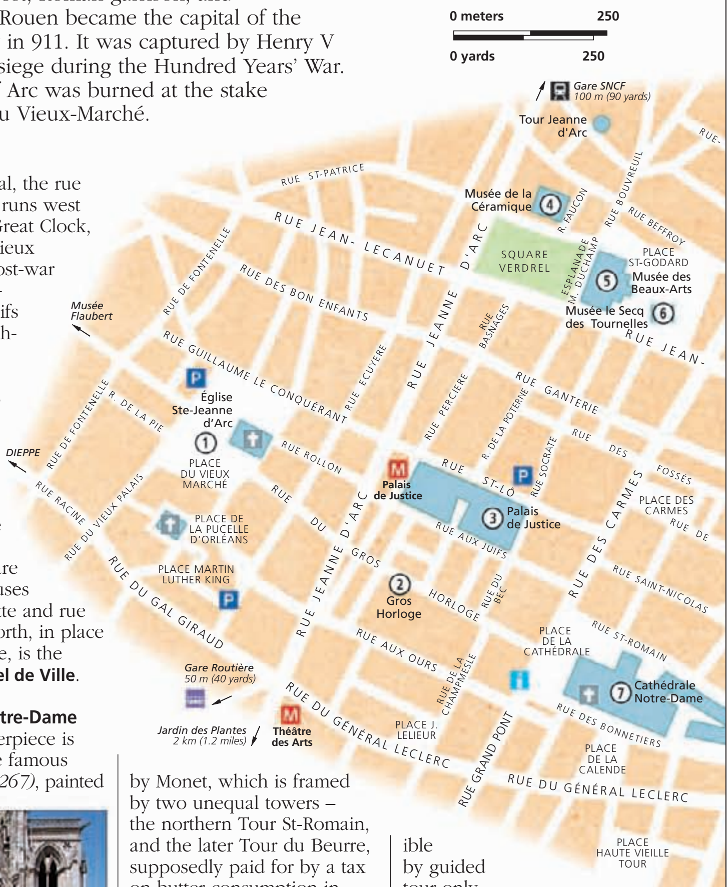
The D913 strikes through oak and beech woods in the Parc Régional de Brotonne to the 7th-century **Abbaye de St-Wandrille**. The Musée de la Marine de Seine at **Caudebec-en-Caux** gives an engrossing account of many aspects of life on this great river over the past 130 years or so.

Monk from Abbaye de St-Wandrille

Rouen ⑲

Founded at the lowest point where the Seine could be bridged, Rouen has prospered through maritime trade and industrialization to become a rich and cultured city. Despite the severe damage of World War II, the city boasts a wealth of historic sights on its right bank, all within walking distance of the central Cathédrale Notre-Dame, frequently painted by Monet. In turn a Celtic trading post, Roman garrison, and Viking colony, Rouen became the capital of the Norman Duchy in 911. It was captured by Henry V in 1419 after a siege during the Hundred Years' War. In 1431 Joan of Arc was burned at the stake here in place du Vieux-Marché.

Rouen, a thriving port on the river Seine


0 meters 250
0 yards 250
Gare SNCF 100 m (90 yards)
Tour Jeanne d'Arc
RUE ST-PATRICE
Musée de la Céramique ④
R. FAUCON
RUE BOUVREUIL
RUE BEFFROY
RUE JEAN-LECANUET
D'ARC
SQUARE VERDREL
ESPLANADE M. DUCHAMP
PLACE ST-GODARD
⑤ Musée des Beaux-Arts
Musée le Secq des Tournelles ⑥
RUE JEAN-
RUE DE FONTENELLE
RUE DES BON ENFANTS
Musée Flaubert
RUE BASNAGES
RUE JEANNE
RUE GUILLAUME LE CONQUÉRANT
RUE ECUYERE
RUE GANTERIE
RUE PERCIÈRE
R. DE LA POTERNE
RUE DES FOSSÉS
Église Ste-Jeanne d'Arc ①
R. DE LA PIE
RUE DE FONTENELLE
DIEPPE
PLACE DU VIEUX MARCHÉ
RUE ROLLON
Palais de Justice
RUE ST-LÔ
RUE SOCRATE
PLACE DES CARMES
③ Palais de Justice
RUE RACINE
RUE DU VIEUX PALAIS
PLACE DE LA PUCELLE D'ORLÉANS
RUE DU GROS HORLOGE
RUE JEANNE D'ARC
RUE AUX JUIFS
RUE DES CARMES
RUE DE
RUE SAINT-NICOLAS
PLACE MARTIN LUTHER KING
② Gros Horloge
RUE DU BEC
RUE DU GAL GIRAUD
RUE AUX OURS
PLACE DE LA CATHÉDRALE
RUE ST-ROMAIN
Gare Routière 50 m (40 yards)
RUE DE LA CHAMPMESLE
⑦ Cathédrale Notre-Dame
RUE DES BONNETIERS
Jardin des Plantes 2 km (1.2 miles)
Théâtre des Arts
RUE DU GÉNÉRAL LECLERC
PLACE J. LELIEUR
RUE GRAND PONT
PLACE DE LA CALENDE
RUE DU GÉNÉRAL LECLERC
PLACE HAUTE VIEILLE TOUR
RUE

Exploring Rouen

From the cathedral, the rue du Gros Horloge runs west under the city's Great Clock, to the place du Vieux Marché and its post-war Eglise Ste-Jeanne-d'Arc. Rue aux Juifs leads past the 15th-century Gothic **Palais de Justice**, once Normandy's parliament, to the fancy stores and cafés around rue des Carmes. Farther east, between the St-Maclou and St-Ouen churches, are half-timbered houses in the rue Damiette and rue Eau de Robec. North, in place Général de Gaulle, is the 18th-century **Hôtel de Ville**.

Cathédrale Notre-Dame

This Gothic masterpiece is dominated by the famous west façade *(see p267)*, painted by Monet, which is framed by two unequal towers – the northern Tour St-Romain, and the later Tour du Beurre, supposedly paid for by a tax on butter consumption in Lent. Above the central lantern tower rises a Neo-Gothic spire, made from cast iron and erected in 1876. Recently restored, both the 14th-century northern Portail des Libraires and the 14th-century southern Portail de la Calende are worth seeing for their precise sculpting and delicate tracery. Many of the cathedral's riches are accessible by guided tour only, including the tomb of Richard the Lionheart, whose heart was buried here, and the rare 11th-century semicircular hall crypt, rediscovered in 1934. The choir/chancel was badly hit by the 1999 storm.

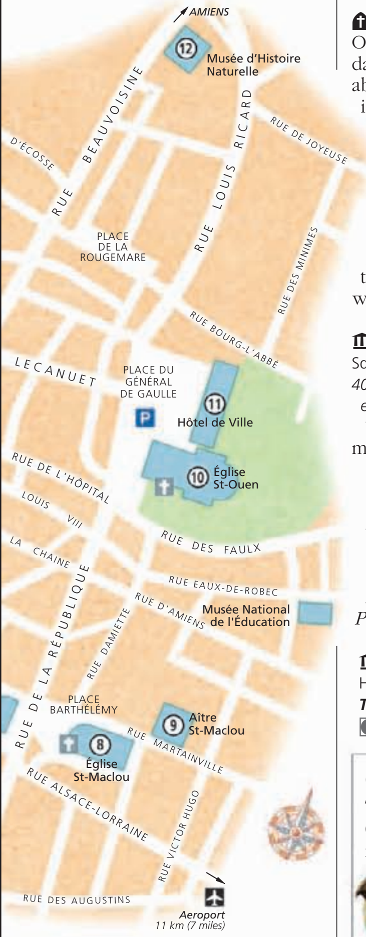
Cathédrale Notre-Dame, Rouen

Eglise St-Maclou

This Flamboyant Gothic church has an intensively

SIGHTS AT A GLANCE

- Aître St-Maclou ⑨
- Cathédrale Notre-Dame ⑦
- Eglise St-Maclou ⑧
- Eglise St-Ouen ⑩
- Gros-Horloge ②
- Hôtel de Ville ⑪
- Musée des Beaux Arts ⑤
- Musée de la Céramique ④
- Musée d'Histoire Naturelle ⑫
- Musée le Secq des Tournelles ⑥
- Palais de Justice ③
- Place du Vieux-Marché ①


AMIENS
⑫ Musée d'Histoire Naturelle
RUE BEAUVOISINE
RUE D'ECOSSE
RUE LOUIS RICARD
RUE DE JOYEUSE
PLACE DE LA ROUGEMARE
RUE DES MINIMES
RUE BOURG-L'ABBÉ
LECANUET
PLACE DU GÉNÉRAL DE GAULLE
P
⑪ Hôtel de Ville
RUE DE L'HÔPITAL
⑩ Église St-Ouen
LOUIS VIII
LA CHAINE
RUE DES FAULX
RUE EAUX-DE-ROBEC
RUE D'AMIENS
Musée National de l'Éducation
RUE DE LA RÉPUBLIQUE
RUE DAMIETTE
PLACE BARTHÉLÉMY
⑨ Aître St-Maclou
RUE MARTAINVILLE
⑧ Église St-Maclou
RUE ALSACE-LORRAINE
RUE VICTOR HUGO
RUE DES AUGUSTINS
Aeroport
11 km (7 miles)

decorated west façade with a five-bay porch and carved wooden doors depicting biblical scenes. Behind the church, its *aître*, or ossuary, is a rare surviving example of a medieval cemetery for the burial of plague victims. The timbers of its buildings, set around the quadrangle, are carved with a macabre array of grinning skulls, crossed bones, coffins, and grave-diggers' implements.

Musée d'Histoire Naturelle

198 rue Beauvoisine. ***Tel*** *02 35 71 41 50.* ○ *Tue–Sun pms.*

This newly refurbished museum is the second largest of its kind in France, holding more than 800,000 objects.

Eglise St-Ouen

Once part of a formidable Benedictine abbey, St-Ouen is a solid Gothic church with a lofty, unadorned interior made all the more beautiful by its restored 14th-century stained glass. Behind the church there is a pleasant park which is ideal for picnics.

Musée des Beaux Arts

Square Verdrel. ***Tel*** *02 35 71 28 40.* ○ *Wed–Mon.* ● *public hols except Easter & Whitsun.* ♿

The city's collection includes major art works: masterpieces by Caravaggio and Velázquez, and paintings by Normandy-born artists Théodore Géricault, Eugène Boudin, and Raoul Dufy. Also on display is Monet's *Rouen Cathedral, The Portal, Gray Weather.*

VISITORS' CHECKLIST

Seine Maritime. *108,800.* ✈ *7 miles (11 km) SE Rouen.* 🚆 *gare rive droite, pl Bernard Tissot (08 92 35 35 35).* 🚌 *25 rue des Charrettes (0825 076 027).* ℹ *25 pl de la Cathédrale (02 32 08 32 40).* *Tue–Sun.* *Feast of Joan of Arc (late May).* **www**.rouentourisme.com

Musée de la Céramique

Hôtel d'Hocqueville,1 rue Faucon. ***Tel*** *02 35 07 31 74.* ○ *Wed–Mon.* ● *public hols.*

Exhibits of 1,000 pieces of Rouen faïence – colorful glazed earthenware – together with other pieces of French and foreign china are displayed in a 17th-century town house. The works trace the history of Rouen faïence to its zenith in the 18th century.

Jug from Musée de la Céramique

Musée Le Secq des Tournelles

Rue Jacques-Villon. ***Tel*** *02 35 88 42 92.* ○ *Wed–Mon.* ● *public hols.* ♿ *ground floor only.*

Located in a 15th-century church, this wrought ironwork museum exhibits antique iron work ranging from keys to corkscrews and Gallo-Roman spoons to mighty tavern signs.

Musée Flaubert

51 rue de Lecat. ***Tel*** *02 35 15 59 95.* ○ *Tue–Sat.* ● *public hols.*

Flaubert's father was a surgeon at Rouen Hospital, and his family home combines memorabilia with an awesome – and occasionally gruesome – display of 17th–19th-century medical equipment.

GUSTAVE FLAUBERT

The novelist Gustave Flaubert (1821–80) was born and raised in Rouen, and the city provides the backdrop for some memorable scenes in his masterpiece, *Madame Bovary*. Published in 1857, this realistic study of a country doctor's wife driven to despair by her love affairs provoked a scandal that made Flaubert's name. His famous stuffed green parrot, which can be seen in the Musée Flaubert, was always perched on his desk.

Flaubert's stuffed parrot

Château Gaillard and the village of Les Andelys, in a loop of the river Seine

Haute-Seine ⑳

Eure. ✈ *Rouen.* 🚆 *Vernon, Val de Reuil.* 🚌 *Gisors, Les Andelys.* ℹ *Les Andelys (02 32 54 41 93).* **http://**office-tourisme.ville-andelys.fr

Southeast of Rouen, the river Seine follows a convoluted course, with most points of interest on its north bank. At the center of the Forêt de Lyons, once the hunting ground for the Dukes of Normandy, is the country town of **Lyons-la-Forêt**, with half-timbered houses and an 18th-century covered market.

To the south the D313 follows the gracefully curving Seine to the town of **Les Andelys**. Above it tower the ruins of Château Gaillard which Richard the Lionheart, as King of England and Duke of Normandy, built in 1197 to defend Rouen from the French. They eventually took the castle in 1204.

Giverny ㉑

Eure. 👥 *600.* ℹ *36 rue Carnot, Vernon (02 32 51 39 60).* **www**.cape-tourisme.fr

In 1883 the Impressionist painter Claude Monet rented a house in the small village of Giverny, and worked here until his death. The house, known as the **Fondation Claude Monet**, and its garden are open to the public. The house is decorated in the color schemes that Monet admired; the gardens are famous as the subject of some of the artist's studies. Only copies are on show, but there are outstanding original 19th- and 20th-century art works in the **Musée de l'Impressionnisme** nearby.

🏛 Fondation Claude Monet
Giverny, Gasny. ***Tel*** *02 32 51 28 21.* ○ *Apr–Oct: daily.* 💶
www.fondation-monet.com

🏛 Musée de l'Impressionnisme
99 rue Claude Monet, Giverny. ***Tel*** *02 32 51 94 65.* ○ *May–Oct.* 💶 ♿

Évreux ㉒

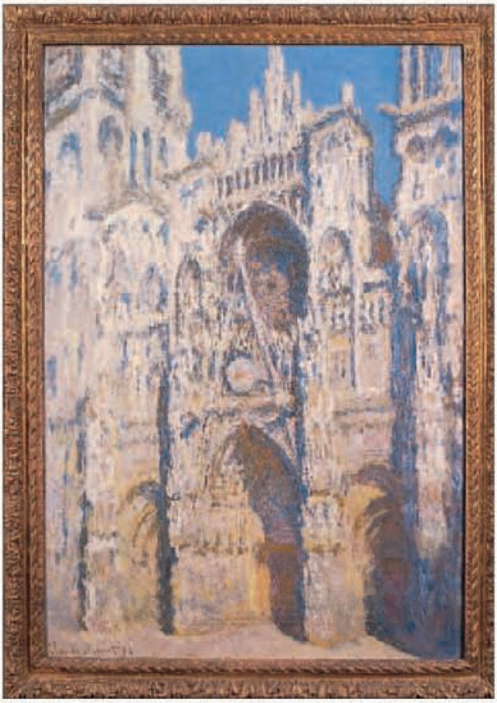
1 Eure. 👥 *55,000.* 🚆 🚌 ℹ *1ter pl du Général de Gaulle (02 32 24 04 43).* 🛒 *Wed & Sat.* **www**.ot-pays-evreux.fr

Though considerably damaged in the war, Évreux is a pleasant cathedral town set in wide, agricultural plains. At its heart, the **Cathédrale Notre-Dame** is renowned for its 14th–15th century stained glass. The building is predominantly Gothic, though Romanesque arches survive in the nave and Renaissance screens adorn its chapels. Next door, the former Bishop's Palace houses the **Musée de l'Ancien Evêché**, with Roman bronze statues of Jupiter and Apollo and fine 18th-century furniture and decorative art.

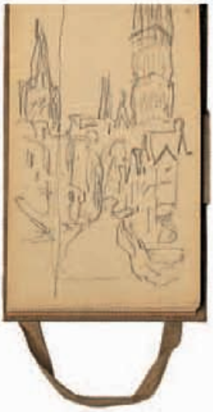
Monet's garden at Giverny, restored to its original profuse glory

Monet's Cathedral Series

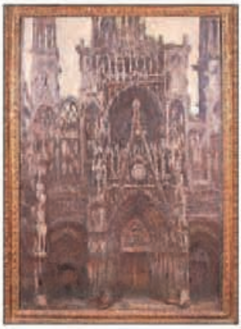
In the 1890s Claude Monet made almost 30 paintings of Rouen's cathedral, several of which are now in the Musée d'Orsay in Paris *(see pp120–21)*. He studied the effects of changing light on its façades, and described both the surface detail and huge bulk, putting color before contour. The archetypal Impressionist, Monet said he conceived this series when he watched the effects of light on a country church, "as the sun's rays slowly dissolved the mists … that wrapped the golden stone in an ideally vaporous envelope."



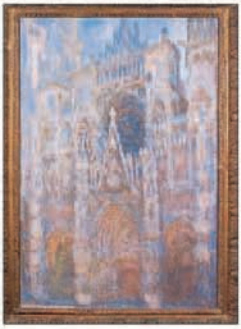
HARMONY IN BLUE AND GOLD *(1894)*
Monet selected a close vantage point for the series and was partial to this southwest view. The sun would cast afternoon shadows across the carved west front, accentuating the cavernous portals and the large rose window.



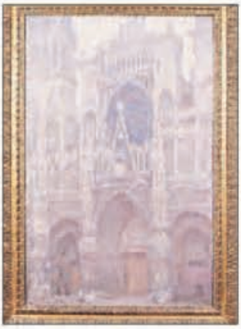
Monet's sketch, *one of many of Rouen, parallels the shimmering effect of the paintings.*



Harmony in Brown *(1894) is the only finished version of a frontal view of the west façade. Analysis has shown that it was begun as a southwest view like the others.*



Harmony in Blue *(1894), compared with Harmony in Blue and Gold, shows the stone of the west façade further softened by the diffuse light of a misty morning.*



The Portal, Gray Weather *(1894) was one of several canvases in the gray color group which showed the cathedral façade in the soft light of an overcast day.*

BRITTANY

FINISTÈRE · CÔTES D'ARMOR · MORBIHAN · ILLE-ET-VILAINE

Jutting defiantly into the Atlantic, France's northwest corner has long been culturally and geographically distinct from the main bulk of the country. Known to the Celts as Armorica, the land of the sea, Brittany's past swirls with the legends of drowned cities and Arthurian forests. Prehistoric megaliths arise mysteriously from land and sea, and the medieval is never far from the modern.

A long, jagged coastline is the region's great attraction. Magnificent beaches line its northern shore, swept clean by huge tides and interspersed with well-established seaside resorts, seasoned fishing ports, and abundant oysterbeds. The south coast is gentler, with wooded river valleys and a milder climate, while the west, being exposed to the Atlantic winds, has a drama that justifies the name Finistère – the End of the Earth.

Inland lies the Argoat – once the Land of the Forest, now a patchwork of undulating fields, woods, and rolling moorland. Parc Régional d'Armorique occupies much of central Finistère, and it is in western Brittany that Breton culture remains most evident. In Quimper, and in the Pays Bigouden, crêpes and cider, traditional costumes, and Celtic music are still a genuine part of the Breton lifestyle.

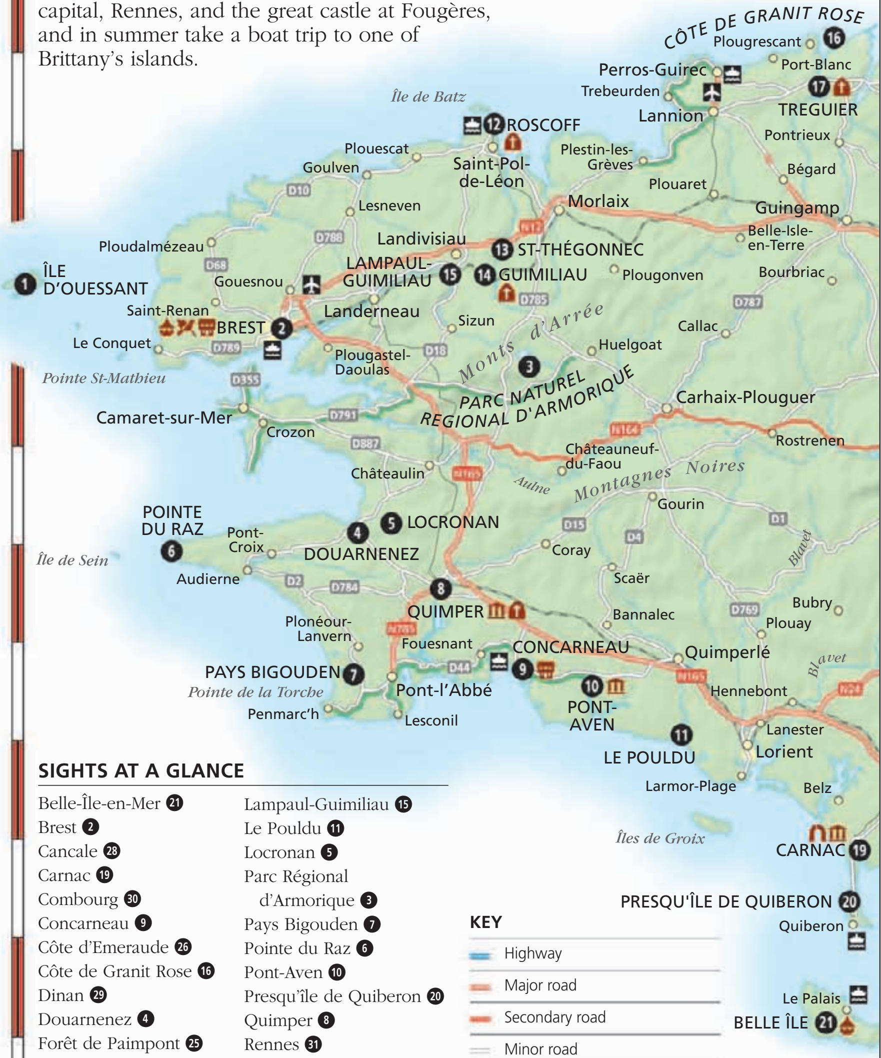
Eastern Brittany has a more conventional appeal. Vannes, Dinan, and Rennes, the Breton capital, have well-preserved medieval quarters where half-timbered buildings shelter inviting markets, stores, crêperies, and restaurants. The walled port of St-Malo on the Côte d'Emeraude recalls the region's maritime prowess, while the remarkably intact castles at Fougères and Vitré are reminders of the mighty border-fortresses that protected Brittany's eastern frontier before its final union with France in 1532.

Women dressed in traditional costume and *coiffe*, the typical Breton lace head-dress

◁ **Characteristic pink granite cliffs on the Côte de Granit Rose, northern Brittany**

Exploring Brittany

Ideal for a seaside vacation, Brittany offers enjoyable drives along the headlands and beaches of the northern Côte d'Emeraude and Côte de Granit Rose, while the south coast has wooded valleys and the prehistoric sites of Carnac and the Golfe du Morbihan. The parish closes *(see pp276–7)* provide an intriguing insight into Breton culture, as does the cathedral town of Quimper. Be sure to visit the regional capital, Rennes, and the great castle at Fougères, and in summer take a boat trip to one of Brittany's islands.


CÔTE DE GRANIT ROSE
Plougrescant ⑯
Port-Blanc
Perros-Guirec
Trebeurden
⑰ TREGUIER
Lannion
Île de Batz
⑫ ROSCOFF
Pontrieux
Plestin-les-Grèves
Plouescat
Saint-Pol-de-Léon
Bégard
Goulven
Plouaret
Morlaix
Guingamp
Lesneven
Belle-Isle-en-Terre
Landivisiau
⑬ ST-THÉGONNEC
Ploudalmézeau
LAMPAUL-GUIMILIAU ⑮
⑭ GUIMILIAU
Plougonven
Bourbriac
① ÎLE D'OUESSANT
Gouesnou
Landerneau
Saint-Renan
BREST ②
Sizun
Monts d'Arrée
Callac
Le Conquet
Huelgoat
Plougastel-Daoulas
③
Pointe St-Mathieu
PARC NATUREL REGIONAL D'ARMORIQUE
Carhaix-Plouguer
Camaret-sur-Mer
Crozon
Rostrenen
Châteauneuf-du-Faou
Châteaulin
Aulne
Montagnes Noires
Gourin
POINTE DU RAZ ⑥
Pont-Croix
④ ⑤ LOCRONAN
DOUARNENEZ
Coray
Île de Sein
Audierne
Blavet
Scaër
⑧ QUIMPER
Bubry
Bannalec
Plouay
Plonéour-Lanvern
Fouesnant
CONCARNEAU ⑨
Quimperlé
PAYS BIGOUDEN ⑦
Pointe de la Torche
Pont-l'Abbé
⑩ PONT-AVEN
Hennebont
Penmarc'h
Lesconil
⑪ LE POULDU
Lanester
Lorient
Larmor-Plage
Belz
Îles de Groix
CARNAC ⑲
PRESQU'ÎLE DE QUIBERON ⑳
Quiberon
Le Palais
BELLE ÎLE ㉑
D10 D788 D68 D789 D355 D791 D887 D785 D787 D18 N12 N164 N165 D15 D4 D1 D2 D784 D44 D769

KEY

- Highway
- Major road
- Secondary road
- Minor road
- Scenic route
- Main railroad
- Minor railroad
- Regional border

SIGHTS AT A GLANCE

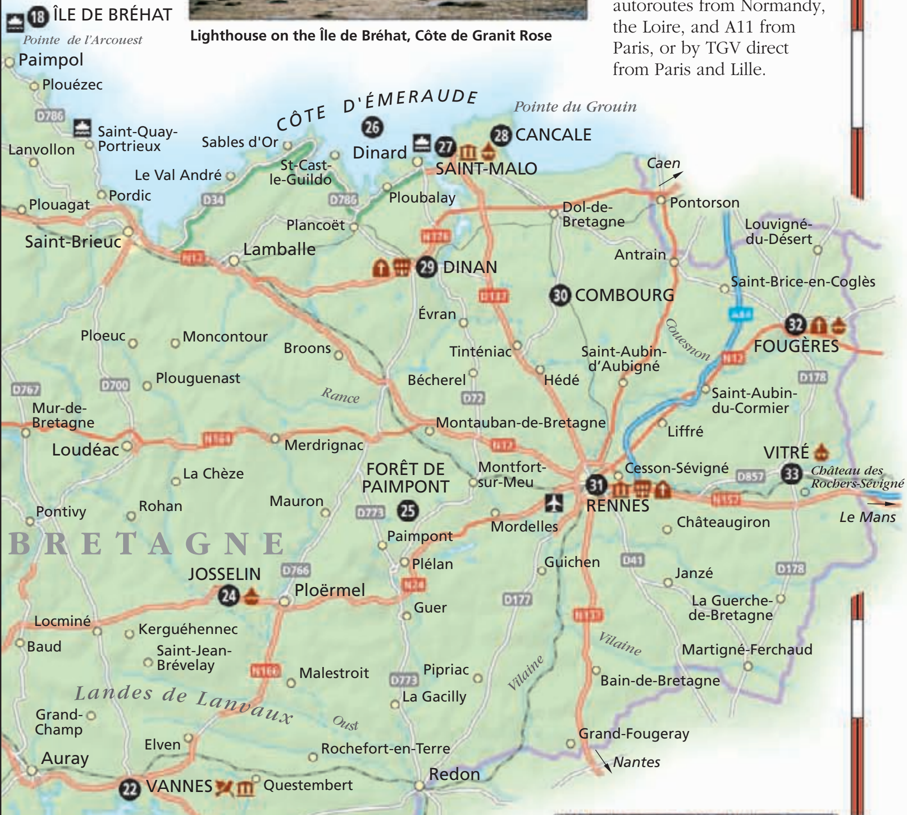
Belle-Île-en-Mer ㉑
Brest ②
Cancale ㉘
Carnac ⑲
Combourg (30)
Concarneau ⑨
Côte d'Emeraude ㉖
Côte de Granit Rose ⑯
Dinan ㉙
Douarnenez ④
Forêt de Paimpont ㉕
Fougères ㉜
Golfe du Morbihan ㉓
Guimiliau ⑭
Île de Bréhat ⑱
Île d'Ouessant ①
Josselin ㉔
Lampaul-Guimiliau ⑮
Le Pouldu ⑪
Locronan ⑤
Parc Régional d'Armorique ③
Pays Bigouden ⑦
Pointe du Raz ⑥
Pont-Aven ⑩
Presqu'île de Quiberon ⑳
Quimper ⑧
Rennes ㉛
Roscoff ⑫
St-Malo ㉗
St-Thégonnec ⑬
Tréguier ⑰
Vannes ㉒
Vitré ㉝

For additional map symbols *see back flap*

Lighthouse on the Île de Bréhat, Côte de Granit Rose

GETTING AROUND

Expressways N12/N165 encircle Brittany, giving easy access to coastal areas, while the N12 and N24 give direct access to Rennes, Brittany's capital. Brittany can be reached by air to Brest, Nantes, and Rennes airports, by Channel ferries to St. Malo and Roscoff, by autoroutes from Normandy, the Loire, and A11 from Paris, or by TGV direct from Paris and Lille.



18 ÎLE DE BRÉHAT
Pointe de l'Arcouest
Paimpol
Plouézec
D786
Saint-Quay-Portrieux
Lanvollon
CÔTE D'ÉMERAUDE
26
Sables d'Or
Dinard
27
SAINT-MALO
28 CANCALE
Pointe du Grouin
Le Val André
St-Cast-le-Guildo
Pordic
Plouagat
D34
D786
Ploubalay
Caen
Dol-de-Bretagne
Pontorson
Saint-Brieuc
N12
Lamballe
Plancoët
N176
Louvigné-du-Désert
Antrain
29 DINAN
30 COMBOURG
N137
Saint-Brice-en-Coglès
Évran
A84
Couesnon
32
FOUGÈRES
N12
Ploeuc
Moncontour
Broons
Tinténiac
Saint-Aubin-d'Aubigné
Hédé
Bécherel
D178
D767
D700
Plouguenast
Rance
D72
Saint-Aubin-du-Cormier
Mur-de-Bretagne
Montauban-de-Bretagne
Liffré
Loudéac
N164
Merdrignac
N12
VITRÉ
La Chèze
FORÊT DE PAIMPONT
Montfort-sur-Meu
Cesson-Sévigné
D857
33
Château des Rochers-Sévigné
31
RENNES
N157
Pontivy
Rohan
Mauron
D773
25
Mordelles
Châteaugiron
Le Mans
BRETAGNE
Paimpont
Plélan
Guichen
D41
Janzé
D178
JOSSELIN
D766
24
Ploërmel
N24
Guer
D177
N137
La Guerche-de-Bretagne
Locminé
Kerguéhennec
Baud
Saint-Jean-Brévelay
Vilaine
Martigné-Ferchaud
N166
Malestroit
Pipriac
D773
Vilaine
Bain-de-Bretagne
La Gacilly
Landes de Lanvaux
Grand-Champ
Oust
Grand-Fougeray
Elven
Rochefort-en-Terre
Nantes
Auray
Redon
22 VANNES
Questembert

Locmariaquer
N165
Muzillac
23
GOLFE DU MORBIHAN
Port-Navalo
La Roche-Bernard
Nantes
0 kilometers 25
0 miles 25

Half-timbered houses in the medieval part of Rennes

Windswept moorlands near Ménez-Meur, Parc Régional d'Armorique

Île d'Ouessant ①

Finistère. 👥 *930.* ✈ *Ouessant (via Brest).* 🚆 *Brest, then boat.* 🚌 *Le Conquet, then boat.* ℹ *pl de l'Eglise, Lampaul (02 98 48 85 83).* **www**.ot-ouessant.fr

A well-known Breton proverb declares "He who sees Ouessant sees his own blood." Also known as Ushant, the island is notorious among sailors for its fierce storms and strong currents. However, this westerly point of France has a pleasant climate in summer and, though often bleak and stormy, can be surprisingly mild in winter. Part of the Parc Naturel Régional d'Armorique, the windswept island supports migrating birds and a small seal population, which may be observed from the Pern and Pen-ar-Roc'h headlands.

Two museums shed light on the island's defiant history, dogged by shipwreck and tragedy. At Niou Uhella, the **Ecomusée d'Ouessant** has furniture made from driftwood and wrecks, often painted blue and white in honor of the Virgin Mary. Nearby at Phare du Créac'h, the **Musée des Phares et Balises** explains the history of Brittany's many lighthouses and their keepers.

🏛 **Ecomusée d'Ouessant**
Maison du Niou. ***Tel*** *02 98 48 86 37.* ○ *May–Oct: daily; Nov–Apr: pms only Tue–Sun.* 🎟 ♿

🏛 **Musée des Phares et Balises**
Pointe de Créac'h. ***Tel*** *02 98 48 80 70.* ○ *daily (winter: pms only).* 🎟

Brest ②

Finistère. 👥 *153,000.* ✈ 🚆 🚌 ⛴ *to islands only.* ℹ *place de la Liberté (02 98 44 24 96).* 🛒 *daily.* **www**.brest-metropole-tourisme.fr

A natural harbor protected by the Presqu'île de Crozon, Brest is France's premier Atlantic naval port with a rich maritime history. Heavily bombed during World War II, it is now a modern commercial city where cargo vessels, yachts, and fishing boats ply the waters. The Cours Dajot promenade has good views of the Rade de Brest. The **Château** houses a naval museum with historic maps, maritime paintings, model ships, carved wooden figureheads, and nautical instruments.

Across the Penfeld river – reached by Europe's largest lifting bridge, the Pont de Recouvrance – is the 14th-century **Tour de la Motte Tanguy**. By the Port de Plaisance, **Océanopolis** "sea center" has three vast pavilions simulating temperate, tropical, and polar ecosystems.

⛫ **Château de Brest**
Tel *02 98 22 12 39.* ○ *Apr–Sep: daily; Oct–Dec & Feb–Mar: pms only daily.* 🎟

🏰 **Tour de la Motte Tanguy**
Sq Pierre Peron. ***Tel*** *02 98 00 88 60.* ○ *Jun–Sep: daily; Oct–May: Wed–Thu, Sat–Sun pms.* ● *Jan 1, May 1, Dec 25.*

🐟 **Océanopolis**
Port de Plaisance du Moulin Blanc. ***Tel*** *02 98 34 40 40.* ○ *May–early Sep: daily; early Sep–Apr: Tue–Sun.* ● *Jan 1, Dec 25.* 🎟 ♿ 🍴 🛍
www.oceanopolis.com

Traditional boatbuilding at Le Port Musée, Douarnenez

Parc Naturel Régional d'Armorique ③

Finistère. ✈ *Brest.* 🚆 *Chateaulin, Landernau.* 🚌 *Le Faou, Huelgoat, Carhaix.* ℹ *Le Faou (02 98 81 90 08).*

The Armorican Regional Nature Park stretches west from the moorlands of the Monts d'Arrée to the Presqu'île de Crozon and Ile d'Ouessant. Within this protected area lies a mixture of farmland, heaths, remains of ancient oak forest and wild, open spaces. The park and its scenic coastline is ideal for walking, riding, and touring by bicycle or car.

Huelgoat is a good starting point for inland walks, while **Ménez-Hom** (1,082 ft, 330 m) at the beginning of the Crozon Peninsula, has excellent views.

The main information centre for the park is at **Le Faou**. Nearby at **Ménez-Meur** is a wooded estate with wild and farm animals, and a Breton horse museum. Scattered around the park are 16 small, specialist museums, some paying tribute to country traditions like hunting, fishing, and tanning. The **Musée de l'Ecole Rurale** at Trégarvan recreates an early 20th-century rural school, while other museums cover subjects as diverse as medieval monastic life, junk dealers, and the lifestyle of a Breton country priest. Contemporary crafts and art can be seen at the **Maison des Artisans** in Brasparts.

Douarnenez ④

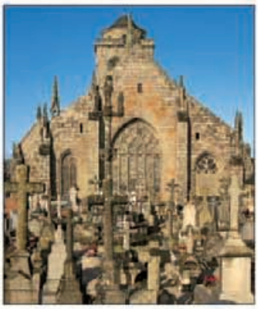
Finistère. 👥 *16,700.* 🚌
ℹ *1 rue du Docteur Mével (02 98 92 13 35).* ◒ *Mon–Wed.*
www.douarnenez-tourisme.com

At the start of this century Douarnenez used to be France's leading sardine port; today it is still devoted to fishing, but is also a tourist resort with beaches on both sides of the Pouldavid estuary.

Nearby lies the tiny **Île Tristan**, linked with the tragic love story of Tristan and Iseult. In the 16th century it was the stronghold of a notorious brigand, La Fontenelle.

The picturesque **Port du Rosmeur** offers cafés, fish restaurants, and boat trips around the bay, with a lively early morning *criée* (fish auction) held in the nearby Nouveau Port. The Port-Rhu has been turned into a floating museum, **Le Port Musée**, with over 100 boats and several shipyards. Some of the larger vessels can be visited.

🏛 Le Port Musée
Pl de l'Enfer. ***Tel*** *02 98 92 65 20.*
○ *Apr–Oct: daily.* ✋ ♿
www.port-musee.org

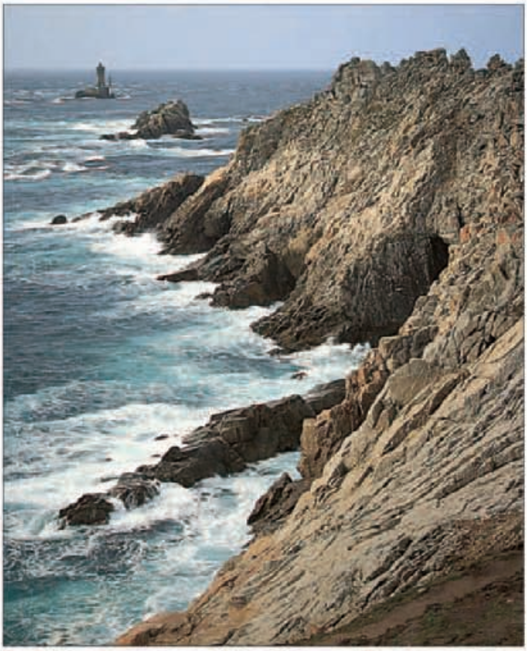


Locronan's 15th-century Eglise St-Ronan, seen from the churchyard

Locronan ⑤

Finistère. 👥 *1,000.* ℹ *pl de la Mairie (02 98 91 70 14).*
www.locronan.org

During the 15th–17th centuries Locronan grew wealthy from the manufacture of sail-cloth. After Louis XIV ended the Breton monopoly on this trade, the town declined – leaving an elegant ensemble of Renaissance buildings that attract many visitors. In the town's central cobbled square stands a late 15th-century church dedicated to the Irish missionary St. Ronan. Down Rue Moal is the delightful **Chapelle Notre-Dame-de-Bonne-Nouvelle** with a calvary and a fountain. Every July Locronan is the scene of a *Troménie,* a hilltop pilgrimage held in honor of St. Ronan. The more elaborate *Grande Troménie* takes place every six years.



The awe-inspiring cliffs of Pointe du Raz

Pointe du Raz ⑥

Finistère. ✈ *Quimper.* 🚆 *Quimper, then bus.* ℹ *Audierne (02 98 70 12 20); Maison du Site (02 98 70 67 18).*
www.pointeduraz.com

The dramatic Pointe du Raz, almost 262 ft (80 m) high, is a headland jutting into the Atlantic at the tip of Cap Sizun. The views of jagged rocks and pounding seas are breathtaking. Further west is the flat Ile de Sein and beyond that the lighthouse of Ar Men. Despite being only 5 ft (1.5 m) above sea level, Ile de Sein is nevertheless home to 260 inhabitants, and can be reached by boat from Audierne in an hour.

Pays Bigouden ⑦

Finistère. 🚌 *Pont l'Abbé.* ℹ *Pont l'Abbé (02 98 82 37 99).*

Brittany's southwest tip is known as the Pays Bigouden, a windy peninsula with proud and ancient traditions. The region is famous for the women's tall *coiffes* still worn at festivals and *pardons (see p243)*, which can also be seen at the **Musée Bigouden**.

Along the Baie d'Audierne is a brooding landscape of weather-beaten hamlets and isolated chapels – the 15th-century calvary at **Notre-Dame-de-Tronoën** is the oldest in Brittany. There are invigorating sea views from **Pointe de la Torche** (a good surfing spot) and from the **Eckmühl lighthouse**.

🏛 Musée Bigouden
Le Château, Pont l'Abbé. ***Tel*** *02 98 66 09 03.* ○ *Easter hols–May: Mon–Sat; Jun–Sep: daily.* ● *May 1.* ✋

Quimper ❽

Finistère. 👥 *67,250.* ✈ 🚉 🚌 ℹ *pl de la Résistance (02 98 53 04 05).* 🛒 *Wed, Sat.* **www**.quimper-tourisme.com

The ancient capital of Cornouaille, Quimper has a distinctly Breton character. Here you can find Breton language books and music on sale, buy a traditional costume, and enjoy some of the best crêpes and cider in Brittany. Quimper gets its name from *kemper*, a Breton word meaning the confluence of two rivers, and the Steir and Odet still flow through this relaxed cathedral city.

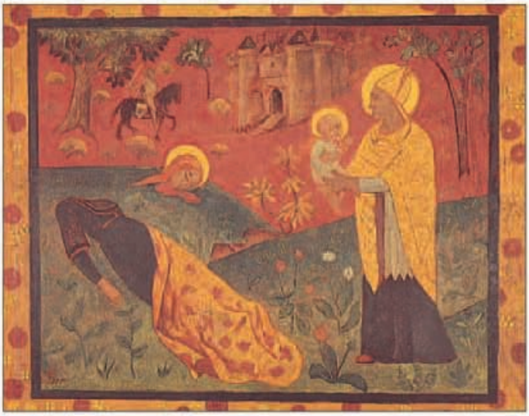
West of the cathedral lies a pedestrianized area known as **Vieux Quimper**, full of stores, crêperies, and half-timbered houses. Rue Kéréon is the main thoroughfare, with the place au Beurre and the picturesque *hôtels particuliers* (mansions) of rue des Gentilshommes to the north.

Quimper has been producing faïence, elegant hand-painted pottery since 1690. The design often features decorative flowers and animals framed by blue and yellow borders. Now mainly decorative, faïence is today exported to collectors all over the world. In the southwest of the city lies the oldest factory, **Faïenceries HB-Henriot**, which is open to visitors all year round.

Typical faïence plate from Quimper

✝ Cathédrale St-Corentin

Quimper's cathedral is dedicated to the city's founder-bishop St-Corentin. Begun in 1240 – its colorfully painted interior now restored – it is the earliest Gothic building in Lower Brittany, and was bizarrely constructed with its choir at a slight angle to the nave, perhaps to fit in with some since-disappeared buildings. The two spires of the west façade were added in 1856. Between them rides a statue of King Gradlon, the mythical founder of the drowned city of Ys. After this deluge he chose Quimper as his new capital and St-Corentin as his spiritual guide.



***The Martyrdom of St Triphine* (1910) by Sérusier, Pont-Aven School**

🏛 Musée des Beaux-Arts

40 pl St-Corentin. ***Tel*** *02 98 95 45 20.* ○ *Jul–Aug: daily; Sep–Jun: Wed–Mon.* ● *most public hols; Nov–Mar: Sun am.* 📷 ♿ **www**.musee-beauxarts.quimper.fr

Quimper's art museum is one of the best in the region. The collection is strong on late 19th- and early 20th-century artists, and their work – such as Jean-Eugène Buland's *Visite à Ste-Marie de Bénodet* – offers a valuable insight into the way visiting painters perpetuated a romantic view of Brittany. Also on show are works by members of the Pont-Aven School and local artists like J-J Lemordant and Max Jacob.

🏛 Musée Départemental Breton

1 rue de Roi-Gradlon. ***Tel*** *02 98 95 21 60.* ○ *Jun–Sep: daily; Oct–May: Tue– Sat; Sun pm.* 📷 ♿

The 16th-century Bishop's Palace has collections of Breton costumes, furniture, and faïence, including Cornouaille *coiffes*, ornately carved box-beds and ward-robes, and turn-of-the-century tourist posters for Brittany.

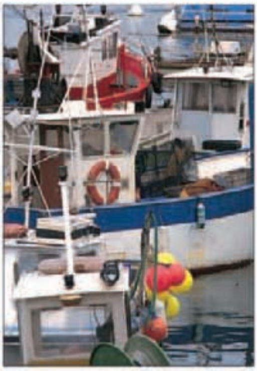
Concarneau ❾

Finistère. 👥 *20,000.* 🚌 ⛴ *only for islands.* ℹ *quai d'Aiguillon (02 98 97 01 44).* 🛒 *Mon & Fri.* **www**.tourismeconcarneau.fr

An important fishing port, Concarneau's principal attraction is its 14th-century **Ville Close** (walled town), built on an island in the harbor and encircled by massive lichen-covered granite ramparts. Access is by bridge from place Jean Jaurès. Parts of the ramparts can be toured, and the narrow streets are full of shops and restaurants. The **Musée de la Pêche**, housed in the port's ancient barracks, explains the local techniques and history of sea-fishing.

🏛 Musée de la Pêche

3 rue Vauban. ***Tel*** *02 98 97 10 20.* ○ *Feb–Sep: daily.* ● *public hols.* 📷 ♿



Fishing boats in Concarneau's busy harbor

Pont-Aven ⑩

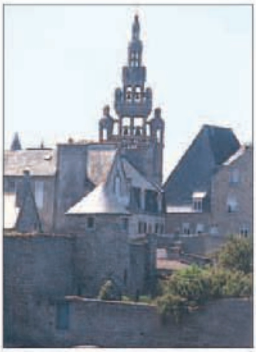
Finistère. 👥 *3,000.* 🚌 ℹ *5 pl de l'Hôtel de Ville (02 98 06 04 70).* ⛱ *Tue, Sat.* **www**.pontaven.com

Once a market town of "14 mills and 15 houses," Pont-Aven's picturesque location in the wooded Aven estuary made it attractive to many late 19th-century artists.

In 1888 Paul Gauguin, along with like-minded painters Emile Bernard and Paul Sérusier, developed a crude, colorful style of painting known as Synthetism. Drawing inspiration from the Breton landscape and its people, the Ecole de Pont-Aven (Pont-Aven School) worked here and in nearby Le Pouldu until 1896.

The town is devoted to art and has 50 private galleries, along with the informative **Musée de Pont-Aven** which documents the achievements of the Pont-Aven School. The surrounding woods proved inspirational to many artists, and offer pleasant walks – one leads through the Bois d'Amour to the **Chapelle de Trémalo**, where the wooden Christ in Gauguin's *Le Christ Jaune* still hangs.

🏛 Musée de Pont-Aven
Pl de l'Hôtel de Ville. ***Tel*** *02 98 06 14 43.* ○ *daily.* ● *early Jan–mid-Feb; between exhibitions.* 💳 ♿ ✋ 🛍



Notre-Dame-de-Kroaz-Baz, Roscoff

Le Pouldu ⑪

Finistère. 👥 *4,000.* 🚌 ℹ *Pouldu Plage, rue C. Filiger (02 98 39 93 42).*

A quiet port at the mouth of the river Laïta, Le Pouldu has a small beach and good walks. Its main attraction is **Maison de Marie Henry**, a reconstruction of the inn where Paul Gauguin and other artists stayed between 1889 and 1893. They covered every inch of the dining room, including the windowpanes, with self-portraits, caricatures, and still-lifes. These were discovered in 1924 beneath layers of wallpaper.

🏛 Maison de Marie Henry
10 rue des Grands Sables. ○ *for temporary exhibitions only – contact Pouldu tourist office for further information.* 💳

Roscoff ⑫

Finistère. 👥 *3,690.* 🚆 🚌 ⛴ ℹ *Ceuai d'Auxerre (02 98 61 12 13).* ⛱ *Wed.* **www**.roscoff-tourisme.com

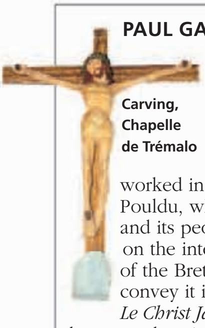
Once a Corsairs' haunt, Roscoff is a thriving Channel port and seaside resort. Signs of its wealthy seafaring past can be found in the old port, along rue Amiral Réveillère and in place Lacaze-Duthiers. Here the granite façades of the 16th- and 17th-century shipowners' mansions, and the weather-beaten caravels and cannon decorating the 16th-century **Eglise Notre-Dame-de-Kroaz-Baz**, testify to the days when the privateers of Roscoff were as notorious as those of St-Malo *(see p282)*.

The famous French onion sellers (Johnnies) first crossed the Channel in 1828, selling their braided onions door to door. The **Maison des Johnnies** tells their colorful history. The **Thalado** is an informative seaweed exhibition center. From the harbor you can take a boat trip to the peaceful **Ile de Batz**. Near Pointe de Bloscon are tropical gardens.

🏛 Maison des Johnnies
48 rue Brizeux. ***Tel*** *02 98 61 25 48.* ○ *mid-Jun–Sep: Mon–Fri & Sun pm; Oct–mid-Jun: Tue am & Thu pm.* ● *Jan.* 💳

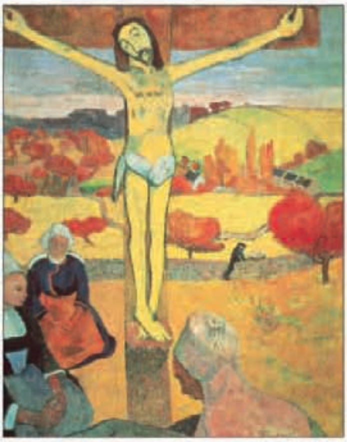
🏛 Thalado
5 rue Victor Hugo. ***Tel*** *02 98 69 77 05.* ○ *daily.* ● *Sep–mid-Jul: Sun.* 💳

PAUL GAUGUIN IN BRITTANY



Carving, Chapelle de Trémalo

Paul Gauguin's (1848–1903) story reads like a romantic novel. At the age of 35 he left his career as a stockbroker to become a full-time painter. From 1886 to 1894 he lived and worked in Brittany, at Pont-Aven and Le Pouldu, where he painted the landscape and its people. He chose to concentrate on the intense, almost "primitive" quality of the Breton Catholic faith, attempting to convey it in his work. This is evident in *Le Christ Jaune* (Yellow Christ), inspired by a woodcarving in the Trémalo chapel. In Gauguin's painting, the Crucifixion is a reality in the midst of the contemporary Breton landscape, rather than a remote or symbolic event. This theme recurs in many of his paintings from the period, including *Jacob Wrestling with the Angel* (1888).



Le Christ Jaune **(1889) by Paul Gauguin**

St-Thégonnec ⓭

Finistère. 🚆 ○ *daily.* ♿

This is one of the most complete parish closes in Brittany. Passing through its triumphal archway, the ossuary is to the left. The calvary, directly ahead, was built in 1610 and perfectly illustrates the extraordinary skills Breton sculptors developed as they worked with the local granite. Among the many animated figures surrounding the central cross, a small niche contains a statue of St-Thégonnec with a cart pulled by wolves.

Guimiliau ⓮

Finistère. ○ *daily.* ♿

Almost 200 figures adorn Guimiliau's intensely decorated calvary (1581–88), many wearing 16th-century dress. Among them you can contemplate the legendary torment of Katell Gollet, a servant girl tortured by demons for stealing a consecrated wafer to please her lover. The church is dedicated to St-Miliau and has a richly decorated south porch. The baptistry's elaborate carved oak canopy dates from 1675.

Font canopy from 1675, Guimiliau

Lampaul-Guimiliau ⓯

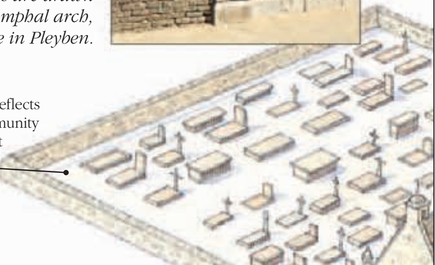
Finistère. ○ *daily.* ♿

Entering through the monumental gate, the chapel and ossuary lie to the left, while the calvary is to the right. Here, however, it is the church that demands most attention. The interior is zealously painted and carved, including some naive scenes from the Passion depicted along the 16th-century rood-beam dividing the nave and choir.

Parish Closes

Reflecting the religious fervor of the Bretons, the Enclos Paroissiaux (parish closes) were built during the 15th–18th centuries. At that time Brittany had few urban centers but many wealthy rural settlements that profited from maritime trading and the manufacture of cloth. Grand religious monuments, some taking over 200 years to complete, were built by small villages inspired by spiritual zeal and the more earthly desire to rival their neighbors. Some of the finest parish closes lie in the Elorn valley, linked by a well-signposted Circuit des Enclos Paroissiaux.

The enclosure, *surrounded by a stone wall, is the hallowed area. By following the wall, visitors are drawn towards the triumphal arch, shown here in Pleyben.*

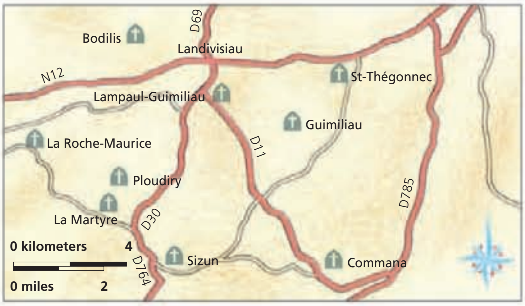


The small cemetery reflects the size of the community that built these great churches.

GUIMILIAU PARISH CLOSE

The three essential features of a parish close are a triumphal gateway marking the entry into the hallowed enclosure, a calvary depicting scenes from the Passion and Crucifixion, and an ossuary beside the church porch.

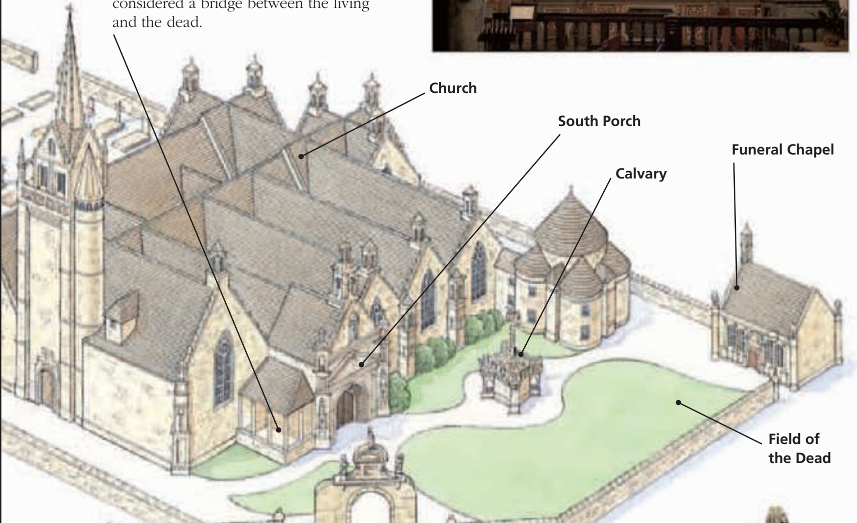
The calvary *is unique to Brittany, and may have been inspired by the crosses set on top of menhirs* (see p279) *by the early Christians. They provide a walk-around Bible lesson, often with the characters in 17th-century costumes as in this example from St-Thégonnec.*


Bodilis
D69
Landivisiau
N12
St-Thégonnec
Lampaul-Guimiliau
Guimiliau
La Roche-Maurice
D11
Ploudiry
D785
La Martyre
D30
0 kilometers 4
0 miles 2
D764
Sizun
Commana

Brittany's parish closes *are mostly in the Elorn Valley. As well as St-Thégonnec, Lampaul-Guimiliau, and Guimiliau, other parish closes to visit include Bodilis, La Martyre, La Roche-Maurice, Ploudiry, Sizun, and Commana. Farther afield lie Plougastel-Daoulas and Pleyben, while Guéhenno is in the Morbihan region.*
ℹ *14 av Maréchal Foch, Landivisiau (02 98 68 33 33).*

Church interiors *are usually adorned with depictions of local saints and scenes from their lives, along with ornately carved beams and furniture. This is the altarpiece in Guimiliau.*

In the ossuary bones exhumed from the cemetery would be stored. Built close to the church entrance, the ossuary was considered a bridge between the living and the dead.


Church
South Porch
Funeral Chapel
Calvary
Field of the Dead
Triumphal Arch

The triumphal arch *at St-Thégonnec, a monumental entrance, heralds the worshipper's arrival on sacred ground, like the righteous entering heaven.*

Carvings in stone *were created as biblical cartoons to instruct and inspire visitors. Their clear message is now often obscured by weather and lichen, but this one in St-Thégonnec is well preserved.*

The chapel of Notre-Dame, perched on the cliffs above the beach of Port-Blanc, Côte de Granit Rose

Côte de Granit Rose ⑯

Côtes d'Armor. ✈ 🚉 🚌 *Lannion.* ℹ *Lannion (02 96 46 41 00).* ⛀ *Thu.* **www**.ot-lannion.fr

The coast between Paimpol and Trébeurden is known as the Côte de Granit Rose due to its pink cliffs. These are best between Trégastel and Trébeurden; their granite is also used in neighboring towns. The coast between Trébeurden and Perros-Guirec is one of Brittany's most popular family vacation areas.

Farther east there are quieter beaches and coves, as at **Trévou-Tréguignec** and **Port-Blanc**. Beyond Tréguier, **Paimpol** is a working fishing port that once sent huge cod and whaling fleets to fish off Iceland and Newfoundland.

Tréguier ⑰

Côtes d'Armor. 👥 *2,950.* ℹ *67 rue Ernest-Renan (02 96 92 22 33).* ⛀ *Wed.*

Overlooking the estuary of the Jaundy and Guindy rivers, Tréguier stands apart from the seaside resorts of the Côte de Granit Rose. It is a typically Breton market town, with one main attraction, the 14th–15th century **Cathédrale St-Tugdual**. It has three towers, one Romanesque, one Gothic, and one 18th-century. The last, financed by Louis XVI with winnings from the Paris Lottery, has holes pierced in the shapes of playing card suits.

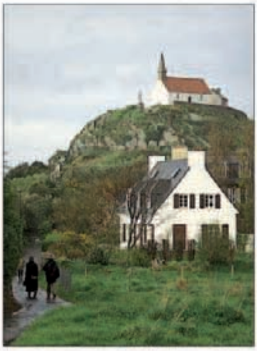
Environs

Chapelle St-Gonery in Plougrescant has a leaning lead spire and a 15th-century painted wooden ceiling.

Ile de Bréhat ⑱

Côtes d'Armor. 👥 *420.* 🚉 🚌 *Paimpol, then bus to Pointe de l'Arcouest (Mon–Sat winter; daily summer), then boat.* ℹ *Paimpol (02 96 20 83 16).* **www**.paimpol-goelo.com

A 15-minute crossing from the Pointe de l'Arcouest, the Ile de Bréhat is actually two islands, joined by a bridge, which together are only 2.2 miles (3.5 km) long. With motorized traffic banned, and a climate mild enough for mimosa and a variety of fruit trees to flourish, it has a relaxing atmosphere. Bicycle rental and boat tours are available in the main town, **Port-Clos**, and you can walk to the island's highest point, the **Chapelle St-Michel**.



Chapelle St-Michel, a landmark on Ile de Bréhat

Carnac ⑲

Morbihan. 👥 *4,600.* 🚌 ℹ *74 avenue des Druides (02 97 52 13 52)* **www**.ot-carnac.fr

Carnac is one of the world's great prehistoric sites, with almost 3,000 menhirs in parallel rows, and an excellent **Musée de Préhistoire**.

The 17th-century **Eglise St-Cornély** is dedicated to St-Cornelius, patron saint of horned animals, scenes from whose life are painted on its wooden ceiling. The town is a popular seaside resort.

Maison des Megaliths
Tel *02 97 52 29 81.* ○ *daily.* 📷 *summer only.* ☞ *obligatory Apr–Sep.*

Musée de Préhistoire
10 pl de la Chapelle. ***Tel*** *02 97 52 22 04.* ○ *Feb–Jun & Sep–Dec: Wed–Mon; Jul–Aug: daily.* ● *Jan, May 1, Sep 25, Dec 25.* 📷 ♿

Presqu'île de Quiberon ⑳

Morbihan. 👥 *5,200.* ✈ *Quiberon (via Lorient).* 🚉 *Jul–Aug.* 🚌 ⛴ *Quiberon.* ℹ *Quiberon (08 25 13 56 00).* ⛀ *Sat, Wed (summer).* **www**.quiberon.com

Once an Island, the slender Quiberon peninsula has a bleak west coast with sea-punished cliffs, known as the Côte Sauvage. The east is more benign. At the peninsula's southern tip is the fishing port and resort of **Quiberon**, with a car ferry to Belle-Ile. In 1795 10,000 Royalist troops were massacred here in an ill-fated attempt to reverse the French Revolution.

Brittany's Prehistoric Monuments

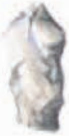
At Carnac, thousands of ancient granite rocks were arranged in mysterious lines and patterns by Megalithic tribes as early as 4,000 BC. Their original purpose remains obscure: the significance was probably religious, but the precise patterns also suggest an early astronomical calendar. Celts, Romans and Christians have since adapted them to their own beliefs.

The Gavrinis Tumulus, Golfe du Morbihan

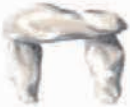
MEGALITHS

There are many different formations of megaliths, all with a particular purpose. Words from the Breton language, such as *men* (stone), *dole* (table), and *hir* (long), are still used to describe them.

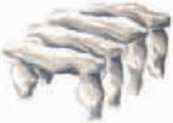
Menhirs, *the most common megaliths, are upright stones, standing alone or arranged in lines. Those in circles are known as cromlechs.*



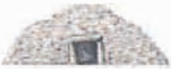
Dolmen, *two upright stones roofed by a third, were used as a burial chamber, such as the Merchant's Table at Locmariaquer.*

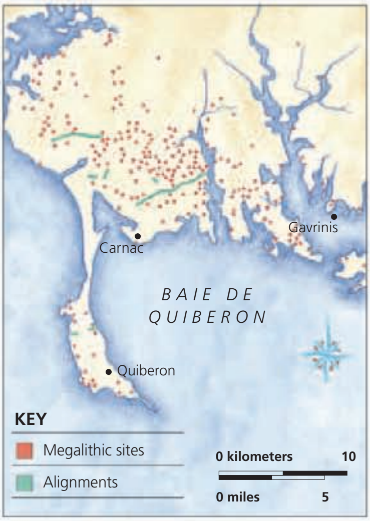


Allée couverte, *upright stones placed in a row and roofed to form a covered alley, can be seen at Carnac.*



A tumulus *is a dolmen covered with stones and soil to form a burial mound.*





Brittany's major megalithic sites

Alignment at Carnac

Menhirs of all shapes in a field near Carnac

Belle-Île-en-Mer ㉑

Morbihan. 👥 *5,200.* ✈ *Quiberon (via Lorient).* ⛴ *from Quiberon.* ℹ *quai Bonnelle (02 97 31 81 93).* ⛱ *Sat, Sun.* **www**.belle-ile.com

Brittany's largest island lies 9 miles (14 km) south of Quiberon and can be reached in 45 minutes by car ferry from Quiberon. The coast has cliffs and good beaches; inland lie exposed highlands intersected by sheltered valleys. In the main town, Le Palais, stands the **Citadelle Vauban**, a 16th-century star-shaped fortress, and there are fine walks and views along the southern Côte Sauvage.

Cloisters of St-Pierre in Vannes

Vannes ㉒

Morbihan. 👥 *58,000.* 🚆 🚌 ℹ *1 rue Thiers (08 25 13 56 10).* ⛱ *Wed & Sat.* **www**.tourisme-vannes.com

Standing at the head of the Golfe du Morbihan, Vannes was the capital of the Veneti, a seafaring Armorican tribe defeated by Caesar in 56 BC. In the 9th century Nominoë, the first Duke of Brittany, made it his power base. The city remained influential up until the signing of the union with France in 1532, when Rennes became the Breton capital. Today it is a busy commercial city with a well-preserved medieval quarter, and a good base for exploring the Golfe du Morbihan.

The impressive eastern walls of old Vannes can be viewed from the promenade de la Garenne. Two of the city's old gates survive at either end: Porte-Prison in the north, and the southern Porte-Poterne with a row of 17th-century wash houses close by.

Breton seafarer, off Belle-Ile's coast

Walking up from Porte St-Vincent, you find the city's old market squares, still in use today. The **place des Lices** was once the scene of medieval tournaments and the streets around the rue de la Monnaie are full of well-preserved 16th-century houses.

Begun in the 13th century, **Cathédrale St-Pierre** has since been drastically remodeled and restored. The Chapel of the Holy Sacrament houses the revered tomb of Vincent Ferrier, a Spanish saint who died in Vannes in 1419.

Opposite the west front of the cathedral, the old covered market **La Cohue** (meaning throng or hubbub) was once the city's central meeting place. Parts of the building date from the 13th century, and a small museum inside displays art and artifacts relevant to the history of the area.

Housed in the 15th-century Château Gaillard, the **Musée d'Histoire** is a rich assembly of finds from Morbihan's many prehistoric sites, including jewelry, pottery, and weapons. There is also a gallery of medieval and Renaissance *objets d'art*.

🏛 **Musée d'Histoire**
Château Gaillard, 2 rue Noé. ***Tel*** *02 97 01 63 00.* ○ *daily (mid-May–mid-Jun: pms only).* ● *public hols.* ♿

Environs
To the south of the city the **Parc du Golfe** is a beautiful leisure park with many amusements, a butterfly greenhouse, an automaton museum, and an aquarium that boasts over 400 species of fish. Northeast of Vannes, off the N166, lie the romantic ruins of the 15th-century **Tours d'Elven**.

Golfe du Morbihan ㉓

Morbihan. ✈ *Lorient.* 🚆 🚌 ⛴ *Vannes.* ℹ *Vannes (08 25 13 56 10).* **www**.tourisme-vannes.com

Morbihan means "little sea" in Breton, an apt description for this landlocked expanse of tidal water. Only connected to the Atlantic by a small channel between the Locmariaquer and Rhuys peninsulas, the gulf is dotted with islands. Around 40 are inhabited, with the **Ile d'Arz** and the **Ile aux Moines** the largest. These are served by regular ferries from Conleau and Port-Blanc respectively.

Around the gulf several small harbors earn a living from fishing, oyster cultivation, and

The picturesque fishing port of Le Bono in Golfe du Morbihan

Young vacationers on the beach at Dinard, a classic seaside resort on the Emerald Coast

tourism. There is a wealth of megalithic sites, notably the island of **Gavrinis** where stone carvings have been excavated *(see p279)*. There are boat trips to Gavrinis from Larmor-Baden and around the gulf from Locmariaquer, Auray, Vannes, and Port-Navalo.

The medieval Château de Josselin on the banks of the river Oust

Josselin ㉔

Morbihan. 👥 *2,500.* 🚌 ℹ *pl de la Congrégation (02 97 22 36 43).* ⊖ *Sat.* **www**.paysdejosselin-tourisme.com

Overlooking the river Oust, Josselin is dominated by a medieval **Château** owned by the de Rohan family since the end of the 15th century. Only four of its nine towers survive. The elaborate inner granite façade incorporates the letter "A" – a tribute to the much-loved Duchess Anne of Brittany (1477–1514), who presided over Brittany's "Golden Age." Tours are given of the 19th-century interior, and in the former stables there is a Musée des Poupées with 600 dolls. In the town, **Basilique Notre-Dame-du-Roncier** contains the mausoleum of the castle's most famous owner and constable of France, Olivier de Clisson (1336–1407). West of Josselin at Kerguéhennec, the grounds of an 18th-century château have become a modern sculpture park.

▲ Château de Josselin
Tel *02 97 22 36 45.* ◯ *Apr–Jun, Sep & 1st 2 wks in Jul: pms only daily; mid-Jul–Aug: daily; Oct: pms only Sat, Sun.* ▨ ♿ **www**.chateaudejosselin.com

Forêt de Paimpont ㉕

Ille-et-Vilaine. ✈ *Rennes.* 🚆 *Monfort-sur-Meu.* 🚌 *Rennes.* ℹ *Plélan (02 99 06 86 07).*

Also known as the Forêt de Brocéliande, this forest is a last remnant of the dense primeval woods that once covered much of Armorica. It has long been associated with the legends of King Arthur, and visitors still come to search for the magical spring where the sorcerer Merlin first met Viviane, the Lady of the Lake. The small village of **Paimpont** provides a good base for exploring both the forest and its myths.

Legendary sorcerer Merlin and Viviane, the Lady of the Lake

Côte d'Emeraude ㉖

Ille et Vilaine & Côtes d'Armor. ✈ ✈ *Dinard–St-Malo.* 🚆 🚌 ⛴ ℹ *Dinard (02 99 46 94 12).* **www**.ot-dinard.com

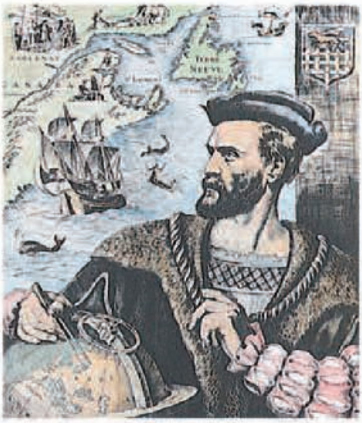
Between Le Val-André and the Pointe du Grouin, near Cancale, sandy beaches, rocky headlands, and classic seaside resorts stretch along Brittany's northern shore. Known as the Emerald Coast, its self-proclaimed Queen is the aristocratic resort of **Dinard**, "discovered" in the 1850s and still playing host to the international rich.

To its west are resorts like St-Jacut-de-la-Mer, St-Cast-le-Guildo, Sables d'Or-les-Pins, and Erquy, all with tempting beaches. In the Baie de la Frênaye, the medieval **Fort La Latte** provides good views from its ancient watchtower, while the lighthouse that dominates **Cap Fréhel** nearby offers even more extensive panoramas.

East of Dinard, the D186 runs across the **Barrage de la Rance** to St-Malo. Built in 1966 it was the world's first dam to generate electricity by using tidal power. Beyond St-Malo, coves and beaches surround La Guimorais, while around the Pointe du Grouin the seas are often truly emerald.

SEAFARERS OF ST-MALO

St-Malo owes its wealth and reputation to the exploits of its mariners. In 1534 Jacques Cartier, born in nearby Rothéneuf, discovered the mouth of the St. Lawrence river in Canada and claimed the territory for France. It was Breton sailors who voyaged to South America in 1698 to colonize the Iles Malouines, known today as Las Malvinas or the Falklands. By the 17th century St-Malo was the largest port in France and famous for its corsairs – privateers licensed by the king to prey on foreign ships. The most illustrious were the swashbuckling René Duguay-Trouin (1673–1736), who captured Rio de Janeiro from the Portuguese in 1711, and the intrepid Robert Surcouf (1773–1827), whose ships hounded vessels of the British East India Company. The riches won by trade and piracy enabled St-Malo's ship-owners to build great mansions known as *malouinières*.



Explorer Jacques Cartier (1491–1557)

St-Malo ㉗

Ille-et-Vilaine. 👥 *53,000.* ✈ 🚆 🚌 ⛴ ℹ *esplanade St-Vincent (08 25 13 52 00).* ⛺ *Tue & Fri.*
www.saint-malo-tourisme.com

Once a fortified island, St-Malo stands in a commanding position at the mouth of the river Rance.

The city is named after Maclou, a Welsh monk who came here in the 6th century to spread the Christian message. During the 16th–19th centuries the port won prosperity and power through the exploits of its seafarers. St-Malo was heavily bombed in 1944 but has since been scrupulously restored and is now a major port and ferry terminal as well as a resort.

The old city is encircled by ramparts that provide fine views of St-Malo and its islands. Take the steps up by the **Porte St-Vincent** and walk clockwise, passing the 15th-century **Grande Porte**.

Within the city is a web of cobbled streets with tall 18th-century buildings housing stores, fish restaurants, and crêperies. Rue Porcon-de-la-Barbinais leads to **Cathédrale St-Vincent**, with its somber 12th-century nave contrasting with the stained glass of the chancel. On cour La Houssaye, the 15th-century Maison de la Duchesse Anne has been carefully restored.

St-Malo seen at low tide through the gate of Fort National

♜ Château de St-Malo

Pl Châteaubriand, near the Marina. ***Tel*** *02 99 40 71 57.* ○ *Apr–Sep: daily; Oct–Mar: Tue–Sun.* ● *Jan 1, May 1, Nov 1 & 11, Dec 25.* ♿

St-Malo's castle dates from the 14th–15th centuries. The great keep contains a museum of the city's history, including the adventures of its state-sponsored corsairs. From its watch towers there is an impressive view. Nearby, in the place Vauban, a tropical aquarium has been built into the ramparts, while on the edge of town, the Grand Aquarium has a shark tank and simulated submarine rides.

🏛 Fort National

Tel *02 99 85 34 33.* ○ *Jun–Sep: daily at low tide.* ♿

Constructed in 1689 by Louis XIV's famous military architect, Vauban, this fort can be reached on foot at low tide and offers good views of St-Malo and its ramparts. At low tide you can also walk out to **Petit Bé Fort** (open Easter–mid -Nov) and **Grand Bé**, where St-Malo-born writer François-René de Chateaubriand lies buried. From the top there are great views along the whole of Côte d'Emeraude *(see p281)*.

🏛 Tour Solidor

St-Servan. ***Tel*** *02 99 40 71 58.* ○ *Apr–Oct: daily; Nov–Mar: Tue–Sun.* ● *Jan 1, May 1, Nov 1 & 11, Dec 25.* ♿

To the west of St-Malo in St-Servan, the three-towered Tour Solidor was built in 1382. Formerly a toll house, it was also a prison under the Revolution, and now houses an intriguing museum devoted to the ships and sailors that rounded Cape Horn, with ship models, logs, and various nautical instruments.

Environs

When the tide is out, good beaches are revealed around St-Malo and in the nearby suburbs of St-Servan and Paramé. A passenger ferry runs to Dinard in summer *(see p281)* and the Channel Islands and there are boat trips up the Rance to Dinan, and out to the Iles Chausey, Ile de Cézembre, and Cap Fréhel.

At Rothéneuf you can visit the **Manoir Limoëlou**, home of the navigator Jacques Cartier. Nearby, on the coast, Les Rochers Sculptés is a

CREUSES de CANCALE
4,20€

Cancale oysters, prized for their taste since Roman times

beguiling array of granite faces and figures carved into the cliffs by a local priest, Abbé Fouré, at the end of the 19th century.

🏠 Manoir Limoëlou
Rue D Macdonald-Stuart, Limoëlou-Rothéneuf. ***Tel*** *02 99 40 97 73.* ○ *Jul–Aug: daily; Sep–Jun: Mon–Sat.* ● *public hols.* 📷 ♿

Cancale ㉘

Ille-et-Vilaine. 👥 *5,350.* 🚌 ℹ *44 rue du Port (02 99 89 63 72).* 🛒 *Sun.* **www**.cancale-tourisme.fr

A small port with views across the Baie du Mont-St-Michel, Cancale is entirely devoted to the cultivation and consumption of oysters. Prized by the Romans, the acclaimed flavor of Cancale's oysters is said to derive from the strong tides that wash over them daily. You can survey the beds from a *sentier des douaniers* (coastguards' footpath, the GR34) running along the cliffs.

There are plenty of opportunities for sampling the local specialty provided by a multitude of bars and restaurants along the busy quays of the Port de la Houle, where the fishing boats arrive at high tide. Devotees should pay a visit to the **Musée de l'Huître, du Coquillage et de la Mer.**

🏛 Musée de l'Huître, du Coquillage et de la Mer – La Ferme Marine
Aurore. ***Tel*** *02 99 89 69 99.* ○ *mid-Feb–Jun & mid-Sep–Oct: Mon–Fri; Jul–mid-Sep: daily.* 🚩 *in English 2pm daily.* 📷

Dinan ㉙

Côtes d'Armor. 👥 *10,000.* 🚆 🚌 ℹ *9 rue du Château (02 96 87 69 76).* 🛒 *Thu.* **www**.dinan-tourisme.com

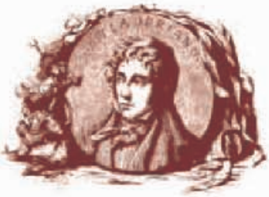
Set on a hill overlooking the wooded Rance valley, Dinan is a modern market town with a medieval heart. Surrounded by ramparts, the well-kept, half-timbered houses and cobbled streets of its Vieille Ville have an impressive, unforced unity best appreciated by climbing to the top of its 15th-century **Tour d'Horloge**, in rue de l'Horloge. Nearby, **Basilique St-Sauveur** contains the heart of Dinan's most famous son, the 14th-century warrior Bertrand du Guesclin.

Behind the church, Les Jardins Anglais offer good views of the river Rance and the viaduct spanning it. A couple of streets farther north, the steep, geranium-decorated rue du Jerzual winds down through the 14th-century town gate to the port. Once a busy harbor from which cloth was shipped, it is now a quiet backwater where you can take a pleasure cruise, or walk along a towpath to the restored 17th-century **Abbaye St-Magloire** at Léhon.

The **Musée du Château** houses a small museum of local history. Next to it is the 15th-century **Tour de Coëtquen**. From here are walks beside the ramparts along the promenade des Petits Fossés and the promenade des Grands Fossés.

View over Dinan and the Gothic bridge crossing the river Rance

♜ Musée du Château
Château de la Duchesse Anne, rue du Château. ***Tel*** *02 96 39 45 20.* ○ *daily.* ● *Jan, 1 week Feb, public hols.* 📷



Author and diplomat François-René de Chateaubriand (1768–1848)

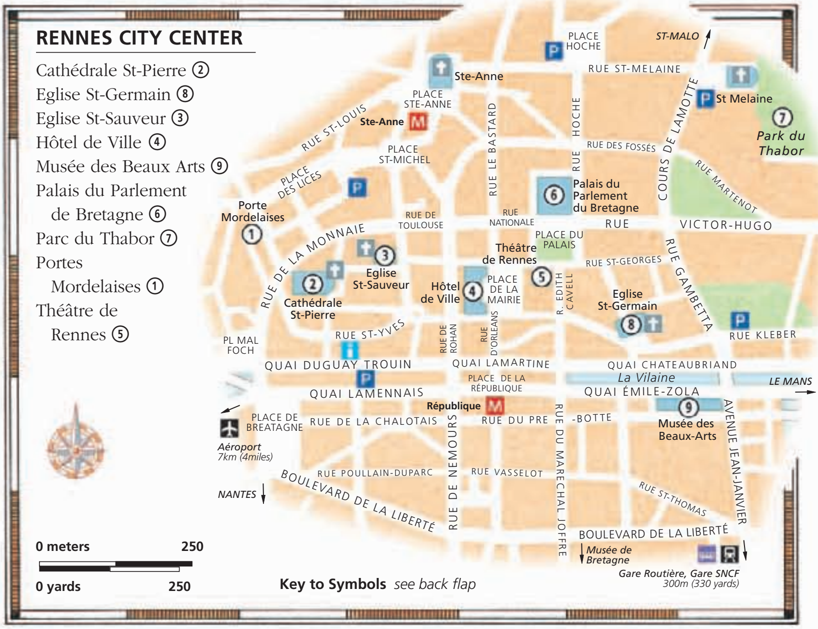
Combourg ㉚

Ille-et-Vilaine. 👥 *5,000.* 🚆 🚌 ℹ *23 pl Albert Parent (02 99 73 13 93).* 🛒 *Mon.* **www**.combourg.org

A small, sleepy town beside a lake, Combourg is completely overshadowed by the great, haunting **Château de Combourg**. The buildings seen today date from the 14th and 15th centuries. In 1761 the château was bought by the Comte de Chateaubriand, and the melancholic childhood spent there by his son, the author and diplomat François-René de Chateaubriand (1768–1848), is candidly described in his entertaining chronicle, *Mémoires d'Outre-Tombe.*

Empty after the Revolution, the château was restored in the 19th century and is open for tours. One room has the belongings of François-René de Chateaubriand.

♜ Château de Combourg
23 rue des Princes. ***Tel*** *02 99 73 22 95, 02 99 73 29 81.* ○ *Jul–Aug: pm daily; Apr–Jun & Sep–Oct: pm Sun–Fri.* 🚩 📷 **www**.combourg.net



RENNES CITY CENTER

Cathédrale St-Pierre ②
Eglise St-Germain ⑧
Eglise St-Sauveur ③
Hôtel de Ville ④
Musée des Beaux Arts ⑨
Palais du Parlement de Bretagne ⑥
Parc du Thabor ⑦
Portes Mordelaises ①
Théâtre de Rennes ⑤

Key to Symbols *see back flap*

PLACE HOCHE
ST-MALO
Ste-Anne
RUE ST-MELAINE
St Melaine
Park du Thabor
PLACE STE-ANNE
Ste-Anne
RUE ST-LOUIS
RUE LE BASTARD
RUE HOCHE
COURS DE LA MOTTE
RUE DES FOSSÉS
RUE MARTENOT
PLACE ST-MICHEL
PLACE DES LICES
Porte Mordelaises
Palais du Parlement du Bretagne
RUE DE TOULOUSE
RUE NATIONALE
RUE VICTOR-HUGO
PLACE DU PALAIS
RUE DE LA MONNAIE
Théâtre de Rennes
RUE ST-GEORGES
RUE GAMBETTA
Eglise St-Sauveur
Hôtel de Ville
PLACE DE LA MAIRIE
R. EDITH CAVELL
Eglise St-Germain
Cathédrale St-Pierre
RUE ST-YVES
RUE DE ROHAN
RUE D'ORLEANS
RUE KLEBER
PL MAL FOCH
QUAI DUGUAY TROUIN
QUAI LAMARTINE
QUAI CHATEAUBRIAND
La Vilaine
LE MANS
PLACE DE LA RÉPUBLIQUE
QUAI LAMENNAIS
QUAI ÉMILE-ZOLA
République
PLACE DE BREATAGNE
RUE DE LA CHALOTAIS
RUE DE NEMOURS
RUE DU PRE -BOTTE
RUE DU MARECHAL JOFFRE
AVENUE JEAN-JANVIER
Musée des Beaux-Arts
Aéroport 7km (4miles)
RUE POULLAIN-DUPARC
RUE VASSELOT
RUE ST-THOMAS
NANTES
BOULEVARD DE LA LIBERTÉ
BOULEVARD DE LA LIBERTÉ
Musée de Bretagne
Gare Routière, Gare SNCF 300m (330 yards)
0 meters 250
0 yards 250

Rennes ㉛

Ille-et-Vilaine. 👥 *212,500.* ✈ 🚆 🚌 ℹ *11 rue St-Yves (02 99 67 11 11).* ⊖ *Tue–Sat.* **www**.tourisme-rennes.com

Founded by the Gauls and colonized by the Romans, Rennes is strategically located where the Vilaine and Ille rivers meet. After Brittany's union with France in 1532, the town became regional capital. In 1720 a fire lasting for six days devastated the city. Today a small part of the medieval city survives, together with the neat grid of 18th-century buildings that arose from the ashes. Around this historic core are the tower blocks and hi-tech factories of modern Rennes – a confident provincial capital with two universities and a thriving cultural life.

The lively market at place des Lices in the heart of Rennes

Wandering through the streets that radiate from the place des Lices and the place Ste-Anne, it is easy to imagine what Rennes was like before the Great Fire. Now mostly pedestrianized, this area has become the city's youthful heart with plenty of bars, crêperies, and designer stores. At the western end of rue de la Monnaie stands the 15th-century **Portes Mordelaises**, once part of the city's ramparts.

Close by, **Cathédrale St-Pierre** was completed in 1844, the third on this site. Note the carved 16th-century Flemish altarpiece. Nearby is the 18th-century **Eglise St-Sauveur**. Just south of the attractive rue St-George, **Eglise St-Germain** has a typically Breton belfry and wooden vaulting. In the place de la Mairie stands the early 18th-century **Hôtel de Ville** and the Neoclassical **Théâtre de Rennes**. The **Parc du Thabor**, once part of a Benedictine monastery, is ideal for walks and picnics.

Half-timbered houses lining the narrow streets of old Rennes

Palais du Parlement de Bretagne

Pl du Parlement. ○ *guided tours organized by Tourist Office (02 99 67 11 66).* **www**.parlement-bretagne.com

Rennes' Law Courts, built in 1618–55, were the seat of the region's governing body until the Revolution. Severely damaged by fire during riots over fish prices in 1994, the major restoration work is all but complete, including the unique coffered ceiling and gilded woodwork of the Grande Chambre. Today, only the Salle des Pas Perdus, with its vaulted ceilings, unfortunately, remains closed.

🏛 Musée des Beaux Arts
20 quai Zola. ***Tel*** *02 23 62 17 47.*
○ *Tue–Sun.* ● *public hols.* 📷
www.mbar.org. **Musée Bretagne** 10 cours des Alliés. ***Tel*** *02 23 40 66 70.*
○ *pm only Tue–Sun.* ● *public hols.*
📷 ♿ **www**.musee-bretagne.fr

The **Musée des Beaux Arts** has a wide-ranging collection of art from the 14th century to the present, including a room of art on Breton themes. There are paintings by Gauguin, Bernard, and other members of the Pont-Aven School *(see p275)*, and three works by Picasso, including the lively *Baigneuse* painted at Dinard in 1928.

Housed in the Rennes cultural center along with the Science Museum and Planetarium, the **Musée de Bretagne** includes examples of traditional Breton furniture and costume, and displays on Brittany's prehistoric megaliths, the growth of Rennes, rural crafts, and the fishing industry.

Environs

Just south of Rennes, the **Eco-musée du Pays de Rennes** traces the history of a local farm since the 17th century.

Some 10 miles (16 km) to the southeast of Rennes is **Châteaugiron**, a charming medieval village, with an imposing castle and houses preserving their wooden eaves.

🏛 Ecomusée du Pays de Rennes
Ferme de la Bintinais, rte de Châtillon-sur-Seiche. ***Tel*** *02 99 51 38 15.* ○ *Apr–Sep: Tue–Sun; Oct–Mar: Tue–Fri (Sat, Sun pm only).* ● *public hols.* 📷 ♿ **www**.ecomusee-rennes-metropole.fr

♜ Château de Châteaugiron
○ *mid-Jun–mid-Sep: daily; by appt rest of year – call 02 99 37 89 02.* 📷

Fougères ㉜

Ille-et-Vilaine. 👥 *23,000.* 🚌
ℹ *2 rue Nationale (02 99 94 12 20).*
⛺ *Sat.* **www**.ot-fougeres.fr

A fortress town close to the Breton border, Fougères rests on a hill overlooking the Nançon river. In the valley below, and still linked to the Haute Ville by a curtain of ancient ramparts, stands the mighty 11th–15th century **Château de Fougères**. To get a good overview of the château, go to the gardens of place aux Arbres behind the 16th-century **Eglise St-Léonard**. From here you can descend to the river and the medieval houses around place du Marchix. The Flamboyant Gothic **Eglise St-Sulpice**, with its 18th-century wood-paneled interior and granite retables, is well worth visiting.

The mighty fortifications of Château de Fougères

A walk around the castle's massive outer fortifications reveals the ambitious scale of its construction, with 13 towers and walls over 10 ft (3 m) thick. You can still climb the castle's ramparts and towers to get a feel of what it was like to live and fight within its staggered defenses. Much of the action in Balzac's novel *Les Chouans* (1829) takes place in and around Fougères and its castle.

♜ Château de Fougères
Pl Pierre-Simon. ***Tel*** *02 99 99 79 59.* ○ *Feb–Dec: daily.* 📷

Overhanging timber-frame houses on rue Beaudrairie, Vitré

Vitré ㉝

Ille-et-Vilaine. 👥 *16,000.* 🚆 🚌 ℹ
pl Général de Gaulle (02 99 75 04 46).
⛺ *Mon & Sat.* **www**.ot-vitre.fr

The fortified town of Vitré is set high on a hill overlooking the Vilaine valley. Its medieval **Château** is complete with pencil-point turrets and picturesque 15th–16th century buildings in attendance. The castle was rebuilt in the 14th–15th centuries and follows a triangular plan, with some of its ramparts walkable. There is a museum of local treasures in the Tour St-Laurent.

To the east, rue Beaudrairie and rue d'Embas have overhanging timber-frame houses with remarkable patterning.

The 15th–16th century **Cathédrale Notre-Dame**, built in Flamboyant Gothic style, has a south façade with an exterior stone pulpit. Farther along rue Notre-Dame, the promenade du Val skirts around the town's ramparts.

To the southeast of Vitré on the D88, the **Château des Rochers-Sévigné** was once the home of Mme. de Sévigné (1626–96), famous letter-writer and chronicler of life at the court of Louis XIV. The park, chapel, and some of her rooms are open to the public.

♜ Château de Vitré
Tel *02 99 75 04 54.* ○ *May–Sep: Wed–Mon; Oct–Apr: Wed–Mon (closed Sun am).* ● *Jan 1, Easter, Nov 1, Dec 25.* 📷

♜ Château des Rochers-Sévigné
Tel *02 99 96 76 51.* ○ *Oct–Jun: 10am–noon, 2–5:30pm daily; Jul–Sep: 10am–6pm daily.* ● *same as above; Oct–Mar: Tue.* 📷 ♿ *restricted.*

THE LOIRE VALLEY

INDRE · INDRE-ET-LOIRE · LOIR-ET-CHER · LOIRET · EURE-ET-LOIR
CHER · VENDEE · MAINE-ET-LOIRE · LOIRE-ATLANTIQUE · SARTHE

Renowned for its sumptuous châteaux, the glorious valley of the Loire, now classified a UNESCO World Heritage Site, is rich both in history and architecture. Like the river Loire, this vast region runs through the heart of French life. Its sophisticated cities, luxuriant landscape, and magnificent food and wine create a bourgeois paradise.

The lush Loire Valley is supremely regal. Orléans was France's intellectual capital in the 13th century, attracting artists, poets, and troubadours to the royal court. But the medieval court never stayed in one place for long, which led to the building of magnificent châteaux all along the Loire. Chambord and Chenonceau, the two greatest Renaissance châteaux, remain prestigious symbols of royal rule, resplendent amid vast hunting forests and waterways.

Due to its central location, culture, and fine cuisine, Tours is the natural visitors' capital. Angers is a close second but more authentic are the historic towns of Saumur, Amboise, Blois, and Beaugency, strung out like jewels along the river. This is the classic Loire Valley, a château trail which embraces the Renaissance gardens of Villandry and the fairytale turrets of Ussé. Venture northward and the cathedral cities of Le Mans and Chartres reign supreme, their medieval centers bordered by Gallo-Roman walls. Nantes in the west is a breezy, forward-looking port and gateway to the Atlantic.

Southward, the windswept Vendée is edged by a wild, sandy coastline that is perfect for windsurfers and nature lovers alike. Inland, the Loire's more peaceful tributaries and the watery Sologne beg to be explored. Also ripe for discovery are troglodyte caves, sleepy hamlets, and small Romanesque churches decorated with frescoes. Inviting inns offer game, fish, and abundant fresh vegetables to be lingered over with a light white Vouvray wine or a fruity Bourgeuil. Overindulgence is no sin in this rich region.

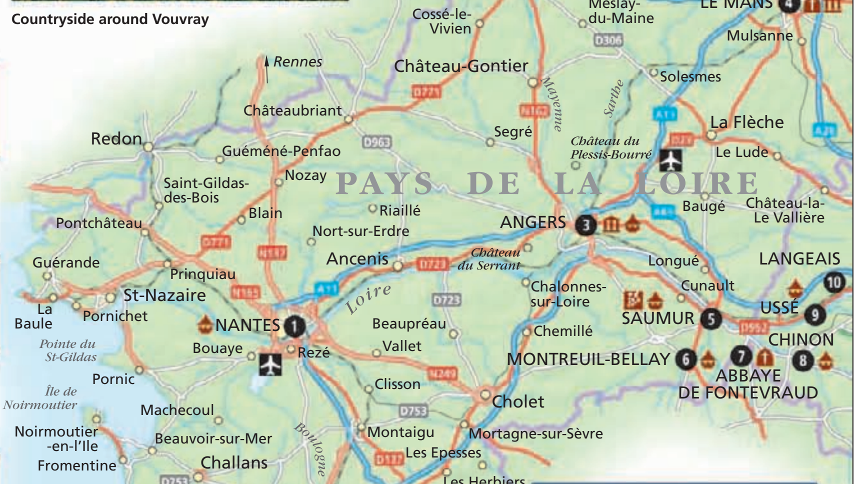
The river Loire at Montsoreau, southeast of Saumur

◁ **The fairytale Château de Saumur towering above the town and the river Loire**

Exploring the Loire Valley

The lush valley landscape, studded with France's greatest châteaux, is the main attraction. Numerous river cruises are available, while the sandy Atlantic coast offers beach holidays. Peaceful country holidays can be had in the Vendée, and in the Loir and Indre valleys. Wine tours focus on Bourgueil, Chinon, Muscadet, Saumur, and Vouvray vintages. The most charming bases are Amboise, Blois, Beaugency, and Saumur, but culture-lovers are well-provided for throughout the region.

Countryside around Vouvray


Caen
Pré-en-Pail
Alençon
Mont des Avaloirs 417m
Mayenne
Ernée
Moulay
Bais
Mayenne
Évron
Sillé-le-Guillaume
Ballon
Louverné
Rennes
Laval
Meslay-du-Maine
LE MANS 4
Cossé-le-Vivien
Mulsanne
Château-Gontier
Solesmes
Rennes
Châteaubriant
Mayenne
Sarthe
La Flèche
Segré
Redon
Guémené-Penfao
Château du Plessis-Bourré
Le Lude
Saint-Gildas-des-Bois
Nozay
PAYS DE LA LOIRE
Riaillé
Baugé
Château-la-Vallière
Pontchâteau
Blain
ANGERS 3
Nort-sur-Erdre
Guérande
Ancenis
Château du Serrant
Longué
LANGEAIS 10
Prinquiau
Chalonnes-sur-Loire
Cunault
La Baule
St-Nazaire
Loire
USSÉ 9
Pornichet
NANTES 1
Beaupréau
SAUMUR 5
Pointe du St-Gildas
Bouaye
Rezé
Vallet
Chemillé
CHINON
MONTREUIL-BELLAY 6
7
8
ABBAYE DE FONTEVRAUD
Pornic
Clisson
Île de Noirmoutier
Machecoul
Cholet
Noirmoutier-en-l'Ile
Beauvoir-sur-Mer
Boulogne
Montaigu
Mortagne-sur-Sèvre
Fromentine
Challans
Les Epesses
Les Herbiers
Saint-Jean-de-Monts
VENDÉE
Aizenay
Pouzauges
Île d'Yeu
Saint-Gilles-sur-Vie
La Roche-sur-Yon
Chantonnay
Sainte-Hermine
Lay
2
Les Sables-d'Olonne
Talmont
Luçon
Fontenay-le-Comte

The 16th-century Château de Villandry and its famous gardens

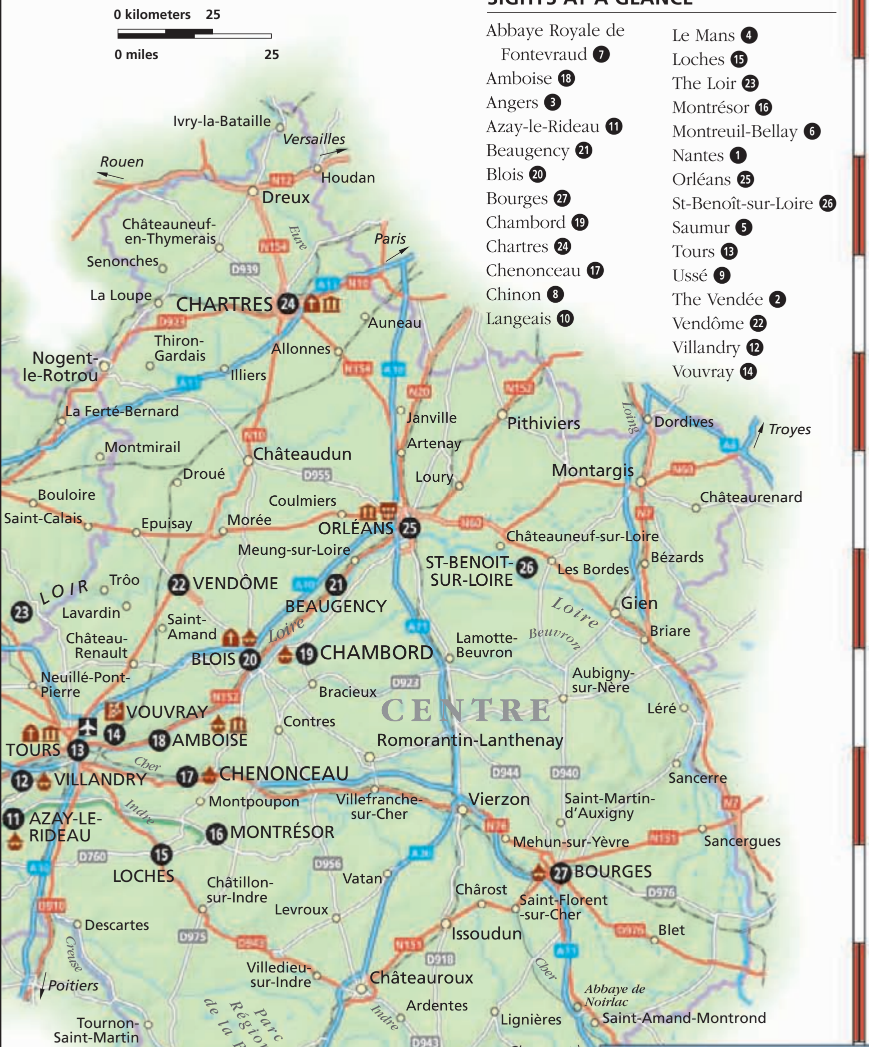
KEY

- 🟦 Highway
- 🟥 Major road
- 🟥 Secondary road
- ▭ Minor road
- 🟩 Scenic route
- — Main railroad
- — Minor railroad
- ▬ Regional border
- ▲ Summit

For additional map symbols *see back flap*

SIGHTS AT A GLANCE

Abbaye Royale de Fontevraud ⑦
Amboise ⑱
Angers ③
Azay-le-Rideau ⑪
Beaugency ㉑
Blois ⑳
Bourges ㉗
Chambord ⑲
Chartres ㉔
Chenonceau ⑰
Chinon ⑧
Langeais ⑩
Le Mans ④
Loches ⑮
The Loir ㉓
Montrésor ⑯
Montreuil-Bellay ⑥
Nantes ①
Orléans ㉕
St-Benoît-sur-Loire ㉖
Saumur ⑤
Tours ⑬
Ussé ⑨
The Vendée ②
Vendôme ㉒
Villandry ⑫
Vouvray ⑭


0 kilometers 25
0 miles 25
Ivry-la-Bataille
Versailles
Rouen
Houdan
Dreux
N12
Châteauneuf-en-Thymerais
Eure
Paris
N154
Senonches
D939
La Loupe
CHARTRES ㉔
A11
N10
D923
Auneau
Thiron-Gardais
Allonnes
Nogent-le-Rotrou
Illiers
N154
A10
A11
N20
N152
La Ferté-Bernard
Janville
Pithiviers
Loing
Dordives
Troyes
A6
N10
Artenay
Montmirail
Châteaudun
Montargis
N60
Droué
D955
Loury
Châteaurenard
Bouloire
Coulmiers
N7
Saint-Calais
Epuisay
Morée
ORLÉANS ㉕
N60
Châteauneuf-sur-Loire
Meung-sur-Loire
ST-BENOIT-SUR-LOIRE ㉖
Les Bordes
Bézards
LOIR
Trôo
㉒ VENDÔME
A10
㉑
㉓
Lavardin
BEAUGENCY
Loire
Gien
Saint-Amand
Château-Renault
Loire
Briare
BLOIS ⑳
⑲ CHAMBORD
Lamotte-Beuvron
Beuvron
A71
Neuillé-Pont-Pierre
Aubigny-sur-Nère
N152
D923
Bracieux
VOUVRAY
⑭
CENTRE
Léré
Contres
TOURS ⑬
⑱ AMBOISE
Romorantin-Lanthenay
Cher
⑫ VILLANDRY
⑰ CHENONCEAU
D944
D940
Sancerre
Montpoupon
Villefranche-sur-Cher
Vierzon
Saint-Martin-d'Auxigny
Indre
⑪ AZAY-LE-RIDEAU
⑯ MONTRÉSOR
N76
N7
Mehun-sur-Yèvre
N151
Sancergues
D760
⑮
A10
LOCHES
D956
A20
Vatan
㉗ BOURGES
Châtillon-sur-Indre
Chârost
D976
Saint-Florent-sur-Cher
D910
Levroux
Descartes
Issoudun
D976
Blet
Creuse
D975
D943
N151
D918
Villedieu-sur-Indre
Cher
A71
Poitiers
Châteauroux
Abbaye de Noirlac
Ardentes
Tournon-Saint-Martin
Indre
Lignières
Saint-Amand-Montrond
Parc Régional de la Brenne
D943
Clermont-Ferrand
Le Blanc
Argenton-sur-Creuse
La Châtre
Culan
Anglin
Aigurande
A20
Limoges

GETTING AROUND

The region is well served by air, road, and rail links. Nantes and Tours airports have international flights; Tours airport also serves Paris. Chartres, Le Mans, Angers, and Nantes are reached from Paris by the A11, and the A10 links Orléans, Blois, and Tours. The TGV train travels from Paris to Le Mans (1 hr); Tours (1 hr); Angers (90 min); and Nantes (2 hr). There is also TGV access from Lille (Eurostar interchange). The smaller châteaus can be difficult to reach by public transit, but there are tours from major tourist centers.

A bridge over the Loire river pictured at dawn

Tomb of François II and his wife, Marguerite de Foix, in Cathédrale St-Pierre

Nantes ❶

Loire-Atlantique. 👪 *270,000.* ✈ 🚉 🚌 ℹ *3 cours Olivier-de-Clisson (08 92 46 40 44).* ⛺ *Tue–Sun.*
www.nantes-tourisme.com

For centuries, Nantes disputed with Rennes the title of capital of Brittany. Yet links with the Plantagenets and Henri IV also bound it to the "royal" river Loire. Since the 1790s it has officially ceased to be part of Brittany, and, though still Breton at heart, it is today capital of the Pays de la Loire.

Visually, Nantes is a city of variety, with hi-tech towers overlooking the port, canals, and Art Nouveau squares. Chic bars and restaurants cram the medieval nucleus, bounded by place St-Croix and the château.

The **Cathédrale St-Pierre et St-Paul**, completed in 1893, is notable both for its sculpted Gothic portals and Renaissance tomb of François II, the last duke of Brittany.

More impressive is the **Château des Ducs de Bretagne**, where Anne of Brittany was born in 1477 and where the Edict of Nantes was signed by Henri IV in 1598, granting Protestants religious freedom. Following major restoration work, the château now houses the lively, interactive **Musée d'Histoire**. It charts the history of Nantes through 32 rooms of exhibits, including Turner's painting of the Loire embanments in Nantes and a virtual visit of the city in 1757.

⌂ Château des Ducs de Bretagne
Pl Marc Elder. ***Tel*** *02 51 17 49 99.*
○ *Jul–Aug: daily; Sep–Jun: Wed–Mon.* ♿

Environs

From Nantes, boats cruise the Erdre and Sèvre Nantaise rivers, passing châteaux, Muscadet vineyards and gentle countryside. Some 20 miles (30 km) southeast of Nantes is **Clisson**, a town razed to the ground during the Vendée Uprising of 1793, and later rebuilt by sculptor François-Frédéric Lemot along Italian lines, with Neoclassical villas, brick belltowers, and red-tiled roofs. On a spur overlooking the Sèvre Nantaise river is the ruined 13th-century **Château de Clisson**.

⌂ Château de Clisson
Tel *02 40 54 02 22.* ○ *Wed–Mon (Oct–Apr: pms only).* ● *May 1, Christmas hols.* ♿ ☛

The Vendée ❷

Vendée and Maine-et-Loire.
✈ *Nantes.* 🚉 🚌 *La Roche-sur-Yon.*
ℹ *La Roche-sur-Yon (02 51 36 00 85)*
www.vendee-tourisme.com

The counter-revolutionary movement which swept western France between 1793 and 1799 began as a series of uprisings in the Vendée, still an evocative name to the French. As a bastion of the *Ancien Régime*, the region rebelled against urban Republican values. But a violent massacre in 1793 left 80,000 royalists dead in one day as they tried to cross the Loire at St-Florent-le-Vieil. The Vendée farmers were staunch royalists, and, although they ultimately lost, the region remains colored by conservatism and religious fervor to this day.

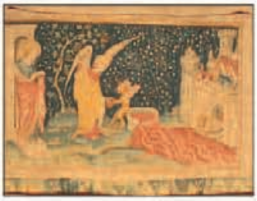
This local history is dramatically retraced at **Le Puy du Fou** in Les Epesses, south of Cholet, with its spectacular summer evening live show, "Cinéscenie." More sober accounts are given at Logis de La Chabotterie near St-Sulpice-de-Verdon, and the Musée du Textile in Cholet, whose flax and hemp textiles provided the royalist heroes with their kerchiefs: originally white, then blood-red.

The tranquil Vendée offers green tourism inland, in the *bocage vendéen*, a wooded backwater with paths and nature trails. The Atlantic coast between the Loire and La Rochelle has beaches, yet the only sizeable resort here is **Les Sables d'Olonne**, with boat trips to the salt-marshes, out to sea, or to the nearby **Ile**

The harbor at Ile de Noirmoutier in the Vendée

d'Yeu. To the north, the marshy **Ile de Noirmoutier** is connected to the mainland at low tide via the Gois causeway.

Inland lies the remote **Marais Poitevin** *(see p408)*, its marshes home to bird sanctuaries and fine churches (Maillezais, Vix, Maillé) in hamlets bordered by canals. It is France's largest complex of manmade waterways, largely reclaimed for farming in the west, while farther east is a nature lover's paradise. Coulon is the main center for renting punts.



The Apocalypse Tapestry in Angers

Angers ③

Maine-et-Loire. 👥 *156,300.*
✈ 🚉 🚌 ℹ *7 pl Kennedy (02 41 23 50 00).* 🧺 *Tue–Sun.*
www.angersloiretourisme.com

Angers is the historic capital of Anjou, home of the Plantagenets and gateway to the Loire Valley. The town has a formidable 13th-century **Château** *(see p242)*. Inside is the longest (338 ft) and one of the finest medieval tapestries in the world. It tells the story of the Apocalypse, with battles between hydras and angels.

A short walk from the castle is the **Cathédrale St-Maurice**, noted for its façade and 13th-century stained-glass windows. Close by is Maison d'Adam, with carvings showing the tree of life. The nearby **Galerie David d'Angers**, housed in the glass-covered ruins of a 13th-century church, celebrates the sculptor born in Angers. Across the river Maine, the Hôpital St-Jean, a hospital for the poor from 1174 to 1854, houses the **Musée Jean Lurçat**. Its prize exhibit is the exquisite *Chant du Monde* tapestry, which was created by Lurçat in 1957. In the same building is **Le Musée de la Tapisserie Contemporaine**, with displays of ceramics and paintings.

Château d'Angers
Tel *02 41 86 48 77.* ○ *daily.* ● *Jan 1, May 1, Nov 1 & 11, Dec 25.* 🎟 ✋

Galerie David d'Angers
33 bis rue Toussaint. ***Tel*** *02 41 05 38 90.*
○ *Jun–Sep: daily; Oct–May: Tue–Sun.* ● *most public hols.* 🎟

Musée Jean Lurçat / Le Musée de la Tapisserie Contemporaine
4 bd Arago. ***Tel*** *02 41 24 18 45.*
○ *Jun–Sep: daily; Oct–May: Tue–Sun.* ● *most public hols.* 🎟 ♿

Environs

Within a 13-mile (20-km) radius of Angers lie the Classical **Château de Serrant** and the moated **Château du Plessis-Bourré**, a decorative pleasure dome encased in a feudal shell. Follow the Loire east along the sandbanks and dykes, enjoying the fish restaurants en route.

Château de Serrant
St-Georges-sur-Loire. ***Tel*** *02 41 39 13 01.* ○ *call or check website for opening schedules.* 🎟 ✋ *oblig.* 🛍
www.chateau-serrant.net

Château du Plessis-Bourré
Ecuillé. ***Tel*** *02 41 32 06 01.* ○ *Jul–Aug: daily; Apr–Jun & Sep: Thu pm–Tue (Feb, Mar, Oct, Nov: Thu–Tue pm only).* 🎟 ✋ *oblig.*
www.plessis-bourre.com

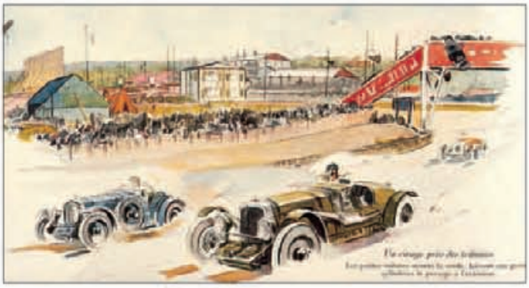
Le Mans ④

Sarthe. 👥 *150,000.* ✈ 🚉 🚌 ℹ *rue de l'Etoile (02 43 28 17 22).* 🧺 *Tue–Sun.* **www**.lemanstourisme.com

Stained-glass Ascension window in the Cathédrale St-Julien, Le Mans

Ever since Monsieur Bollée became the first designer to place an engine under a car hood, Le Mans has been synonymous with the motor trade. Bollée's son created an embryonic Grand Prix, since when the event *(see p37)* and associated **Musée Automobile** have remained star attractions. Cité Plantagenét, the ancient fortified center, is surrounded by the greatest Roman walls in France, best seen from the quai Louis Blanc. Once insalubrious and abandoned, the area has been extensively restored, and is now used for filming epics such as Cyrano de Bergerac, set among its Renaissance mansions, half-timbered houses, arcaded alleys, and tiny courtyards. The crowning point is the Gothic **Cathédrale St-Julien,** borne aloft on flying buttresses, with its Romanesque portal rivaling that of Chartres. Inside, the Angevin nave opens into a Gothic choir, complemented by sculpted capitals and a 12th-century Ascension window.

Musée Automobile
Circuit des 24 Heures du Mans.
Tel *02 43 72 72 24.* ○ *Mar–Dec: daily.* 🎟 ♿ *s*



Le Mans racetrack: a 1933 print from the French magazine *Illustration*

Saumur ❺

Maine-et-Loire. 👥 *32,000.* 🚆 🚌 ℹ *pl de la Bilange (02 41 40 20 60).* 🛒 *Thu, Sat.* **www**.saumur-tourisme.com

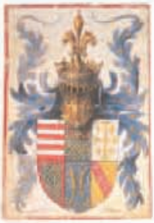
The Château de Saumur and spire of St-Pierre seen from the Loire

Saumur is celebrated for its fairytale château, cavalry school, mushrooms, and sparkling wines. Its stone mansions recall the city's 17th-century heyday, when it was a bastion of Protestantism and vied with Angers as the intellectual capital of Anjou.

High above both town and river is the turreted **Château de Saumur**. The present structure was started in the 14th-century by Louis I of Anjou and remodeled later by his grandson, King René. Collections include medieval sculpture and equestrian exhibits.

The Military Cavalry School, established in Saumur in 1814, led to the creation of the **Musée des Blindés**, which exhibits 150 different armored vehicles, and the prestigious Cadre Noir horse-riding formation. Morning training sessions and stable visits, along with occasional evening performances, can be seen at the **Ecole Nationale d'Equitation**. The nearby subterranean **Parc Pierre et Lumière** (sculptures in the tufa cave walls of prominent local tourist sites), is well worth a visit; as is Europe's largest dolmen, with its collection of prehistoric implements, in Bagneux.

Before you leave the area, be sure to sample the local *méthode champenoise* sparkling wine – the best in France outside Champagne – in one of the many wine cellars or at the Maison des Vins in town.


King René's coat of arms

⌂ **Château de Saumur**
Tel *02 41 40 24 40.* ● *for renovation until 2010–11.*

Ecole Nationale d'Equitation
St-Hilaire-St-Florent. ***Tel*** *02 41 53 50 60.* ○ *Apr–mid-Oct: Mon pm–Sat. (Phone for details of performance times).* ● *public hols.* 🎫 ♿ ☞ *oblig.* ☕ **www**.cadrenoir.fr

Environs

The lovely **Eglise Notre-Dame** at Cunault, an 11th-century Romanesque priory church, has a fine west door and carved capitals, while an amazing subterranean fort and myriad caves and tunnels can be seen at **Château de Brézé**.

TROGLODYTE DWELLINGS

Some of the best troglodyte settlements in France have been carved out of the soft limestone (tufa) of the Loire Valley, especially around Saumur, Vouvray, and along the river Loir. The caves, cut out of cliff-faces or dug underground, have been a source of cheap, secure accommodations for centuries. Today they are popular as *résidences secondaires*, or used for wine storage and mushroom growing. Some are now restaurants or hotels, and old quarries at Doué-la-Fontaine accommodate a zoo and a 15th-century amphitheater. At Rochemenier, near Saumur, is a well-preserved troglodyte village museum. A central pit is surrounded by a warren of caves, barns, wine cellars, dwellings, and even a simple underground chapel.

Heralded by chimney pots, the underground hamlet of nearby La Fosse was inhabited until 20 years ago by three families, and is now a museum of family life underground.

A typical troglodyte dwelling

Montreuil-Bellay ❻

Maine-et-Loire. 👥 *4,500.* 🚆 🚌
ℹ *pl du Concorde (02 41 52 32 39).*
🛒 *Tue (& Sun, mid-Jun–mid-Sep).*
www.ville-montreuil-bellay.fr

Set on the river Thouet 11 miles (17 km) south of Saumur, Montreuil-Bellay is one of the region's most gracious small towns and is an ideal base for touring Anjou. The towering roofline of the Gothic collegiate church overlooks walled mansions and surrounding vineyards (wine-tasting recommended). The **Chapelle St-Jean** was an ancient hospice and pilgrimage center.

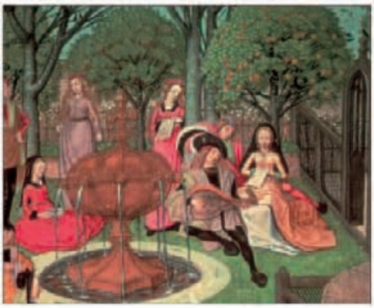
The imposing **Château de Montreuil-Bellay**, established in 1025, is a veritable fortress with its 13 interlocking towers, barbican, and ramparts.

A 15th-century house lies beyond the fortified gateway, complete with vaulted medieval kitchen and an oratory decorated with 15th-century frescoes.

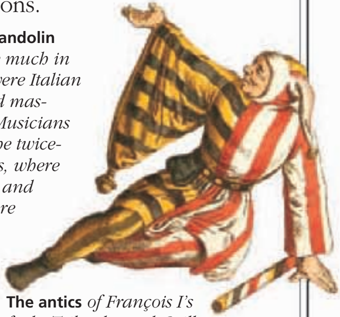
⌂ **Château de Montreuil-Bellay**
Tel *02 41 52 33 06.* ○ *Apr–Oct: Wed–Mon (Jul–Aug: daily).* 🎫 ☞

Court Life in the Renaissance

François I's reign, from 1515 to 1547, witnessed the apogee of the French Renaissance, characterized by an intense period of château-building and an interest in humanism and the arts. The itinerant court traveled between the pleasure palaces of Amboise, Blois, and Chambord in the Loire. Days were devoted to hunting, falconry, *fêtes champêtres* (country festivals), or *jeu de paume*, a forerunner of tennis. Nights were given over to feasting, balls, poetry, and romantic assignations.



Lute and mandolin *music were much in vogue, as were Italian recitals and masquerades. Musicians played at the twice-weekly balls, where the pavane and galliard were danced.*



The antics *of François I's fools, Triboulet and Caillette, amused the court. Yet they were often mistreated: courtiers regularly nailed Caillette's ears to a post for fun, daring him to remain silent.*

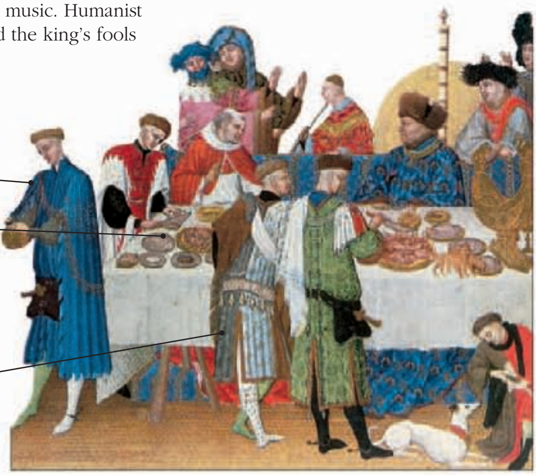
RENAISSANCE FEASTS

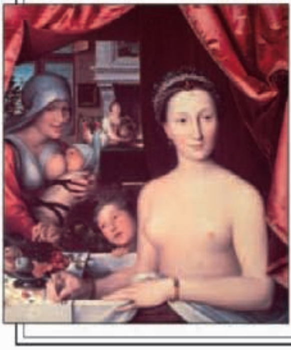
Dinner usually took place before 7pm to the accompaniment of Italian music. Humanist texts were read aloud and the king's fools amused the courtiers.

Courtiers used their own knives at dinner. Forks were still rare, although their use was spreading from Italy.

A typical royal dinner comprised smoked eel, salted ham, veal pâté, egg and saffron soups, roast game and boiled meats, as well as fish dishes in lemon or gooseberry sauce.

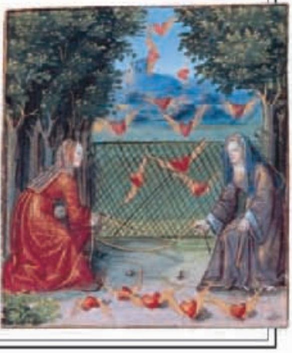
The cost of lavish damask, satin, and silk costumes often sent courtiers into debt.





Diane de Poitiers *(1499–1566) became the mistress of the future Henri II when he was 12 years old. Two years later he married Catherine de' Medici, but Diane remained his favorite until his death.*

Artists symbolized love *in different ways during the Renaissance. Winged hearts charmingly perform the function here.*



The Grand Moûtier cloisters

Abbaye Royale de Fontevraud ⑦

Maine-et-Loire. 🚌 *from Saumur.* ***Tel*** *02 41 51 73 52.* ○ *daily.* ● *Jan 1, May 1, Nov 1 & 11, Dec 25.* ♿ **www**.abbaye-fontevraud.com

The Abbaye Royale de Fontevraud is the largest and most remarkably intact medieval abbey in Europe. It was founded in the early 12th century by Robert d'Arbrissel, a visionary itinerant preacher who set up a Benedictine community of monks, nuns, nobles, lepers, and vagabonds. The radical founder entrusted the running of the abbey to an abbess, usually from a noble family, and the abbey became a favorite sanctuary for the female aristocracy, including Eleanor of Aquitaine.

From 1804 to 1963 the abbey was used as a prison, since when the buildings have been undergoing painstaking restoration by the French State. Wandering around the abbey buildings and gardens gives a fascinating insight into monastic life. The focal point was the Romanesque abbey church, consecrated in 1119. It features beautifully carved capitals and an immense single nave with four domes, one of the finest examples of a cupola nave in France. Inside are the painted effigies of the Plantagenets dating from the early 13th century: Henry II of England, his redoubtable wife Queen Eleanor of Aquitaine, their crusading non-English-speaking son Richard the Lion-Heart, and Isabelle d'Angoulême, widow of his infamous brother, King John of England.

The abbey's nuns lived around the Renaissance **Grand Moûtier cloisters**, forming one of the largest nunneries in France, and the leper colony was housed in the **St-Lazare priory**, now the atmospheric abbey hotel *(see p555)*. The monastic quarters of **St. Jean de l'Habit** no longer exist. Most impressive is the octagonal kitchen with its fireplaces and chimneys in the **Tour Evraud**, a rare example of secular Romanesque architecture.

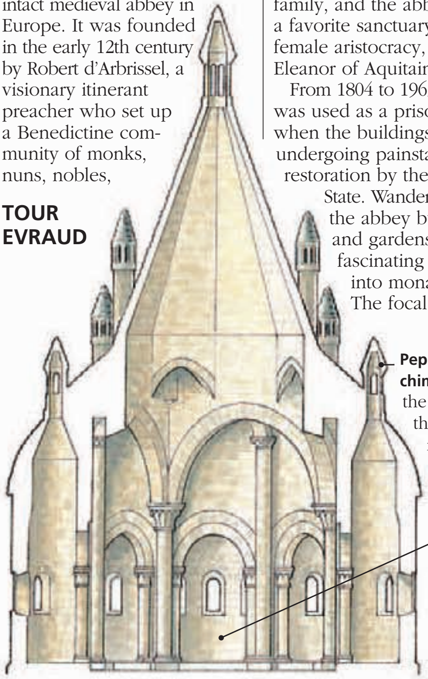
The abbey, now an important arts center, regularly hosts concerts and exhibitions.

THE PLANTAGENETS

The legendary counts of Anjou were named after the *genêt,* the sprig of broom Geoffrey Plantagenet wore in his cap. He married Matilda, daughter of England's Henry I. In 1154, when their son Henry – who had married Eleanor of Aquitaine *(see p51)* – acceded to the English throne, the Plantagenet dynasty of English kings was founded, fusing French and English destinies for 300 years.

Effigies of Henry II, Plantagenet king of England, and Eleanor of Aquitaine

TOUR EVRAUD



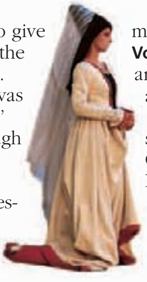
Pepperpot chimneys top the towers of the kitchen, restored in the 20th century.

Fireplace alcoves that look like side chapels housed the ovens.

Chinon ⑧

Indre-et-Loire. 👥 *9,000.* 🚆 🚌 ℹ *pl Hofheim (02 47 93 17 85).* 🧺 *Thu.* **www**.tourisme.chinon.com

The Château de Chinon is an important shrine in Joan of Arc country and, as such, wheedles money from all passing pilgrims. It was here in 1429 that the saint first recognized the disguised dauphin (later Charles VII), and persuaded him to give her an army to drive the English out of France. Before that, Chinon was the Plantagenet kings' favorite castle. Although the **château** is now mostly in ruins, the ramparts are an impressive sight from the opposite bank of the Vienne river. The town's bijou center is like a medieval film set. **Rue Voltaire,** lined with 15th- and 16th-century houses and once enclosed by the castle walls, represents a cross-section of Chinonais history. At No. 12 is the **Musée Animé du Vin**, where animated figures tell the story of winemaking. **No. 44** which houses the Musée d'Art et d'Histoire, is a



Stallholder at Chinon's market

Vineyard in the Chinon wine region

stone mansion where, in 1199, Richard the Lion-Heart is said to have died. The grandest mansion is the **Palais du Gouverneur,** with its double staircase and loggia. More charming is the **Maison Rouge** in the Grand Carroi, studded with a red-brick herringbone pattern.

The 15th-century **Hostellerie Gargantua**, where Rabelais' lawyer father once practised, is now an agreeable inn *(see p569).*The great Renaissance writer lived nearby in the Rue de la Lamproie.

The 1900s market, with stallholders in period costume, folk dancing and music is a must (3rd Sat Aug).

🏛 Musée Animé du Vin
12 rue Voltaire. ***Tel*** *02 47 93 25 63.*
○ *mid-Mar–mid-Oct: daily.* ♿ ☞

Environs

Three miles (5 km) southwest of Chinon is **La Devinière,** birthplace of François Rabelais, the 16th-century writer, priest, doctor and humanist scholar.

🏛 La Devinière
Seuilly. ***Tel*** *02 47 95 91 18.* ○ *Wed–Mon.* ● *Jan 1, Dec 25.* ♿ ☞

Château d'Ussé ⑨

Indre-et-Loire. 🚉 *Chinon, then taxi.* ***Tel*** *02 47 95 54 05.* ○ *mid-Feb–mid-Nov: daily.* ♿ ☞

The fairytale Château d'Ussé enjoys a bucolic setting overlooking watery meadows and the river Indre. Its romantic white turrets, pointed towers, and chimneys inspired Charles Perrault's *Sleeping Beauty*.

Constructed in the 15th century, the castle was gradually transformed into an aristocratic château, which is still privately owned *(see p242)*. However, the sunless and musty interior is rather disappointing and the *Sleeping Beauty* tableaux are clumsily presented.

The château's delightful Renaissance chapel, framed by the oak forest of Chinon, has lost its Aubusson tapestries, but retains a lovely della Robbia terra cotta *Virgin*.

Château de Langeais ⑩

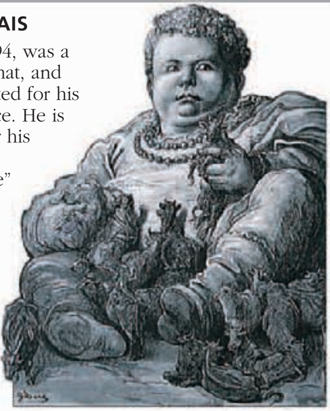
Indre-et-Loire. 🚉 *Langeais.* ***Tel*** *02 47 96 72 60.* ○ *daily.* ● *Dec 25.* ♿ ☞ **www**.chateau-de-langeais.com

Compared with neighboring towns, Langeais is distinctly untouristy and has a welcoming, unpretentious feel. Its château is fiercely feudal, built strictly for defense with a drawbridge, portcullis, and no concessions to the Renaissance. It was constructed by Louis XI in just four years, from 1465–9, with hardly an alteration since then. The ruins of an impressive keep, built by Foulques Nerra in AD 994, stand in the small château courtyard.

A *son et lumière* in the Salle de la Chapelle represents the marriage of Charles VIII and his child-bride Anne of Brittany in 1491. Many of the well-furnished rooms have intricate designs on the tiled floors, and all are hung with fine 15th- and 16th-century Flemish and Aubusson tapestries.

FRANÇOIS RABELAIS

Rabelais, born in 1494, was a priest, doctor, diplomat, and humanist scholar noted for his wisdom and tolerance. He is best remembered for his many ribald satires (written as "medicine" for his patients), such as *Pantagruel* and *Gargantua*, set around his native Chinon.



Infant Pantagruel, depicted by Doré in 1854, was fed on the milk of 17,913 cows

Château d'Azay-le-Rideau ⑪

Indre-et-Loire. 🚆 🚌 *Azay-le-Rideau.*
Tel *02 47 45 42 04.* ○ *daily.*
● *Jan 1, May 1, Dec 25.* 📷 ♿
Son et Lumière*: Jul–Aug.*

Balzac called Azay-le-Rideau "A multifaceted diamond set in the Indre." It is the most beguiling and feminine of Loire châteaux, created in the early 16th century by Philippa Lesbahy, wife of François I's corrupt finance minister. Although Azay is superficially Gothic *(see pp54–55, 242)*, it clearly shows the transition to the Renaissance: the turrets are purely decorative and the moats are picturesque pools. Azay was a pleasure palace, lived in during fine weather and deserted in winter.

The interior is equally delightful, an airy, creaking mansion smelling faintly of cedarwood and full of lovingly re-created domestic detail. The first floor is furnished in the Renaissance style, with a fine example of a portable Spanish cabinet and exquisite tapestries. The ground floor has 19th-century furniture, dating from the period of the château's restoration. The four-story grand staircase is unusual for its time, being straight as opposed to spiral.

Wine-tasting opportunities in the village are a welcome reminder that vineyards are all around. Unlike most Loire villages, Azay is lively at night, thanks to the château's poetic *son et lumière*.

Château d'Azay-le-Rideau reflected in the river Indre

The Château de Villandry's *jardin d'ornement*

Château de Villandry ⑫

Indre-et-Loire. 🚆 *Tours, then taxi.*
Tel *02 47 50 02 09.* ○ **Château:** *mid-Feb–mid-Nov & mid-Dec–early Jan: daily.* **Gardens:** *daily.* 📷 ♿ 🍴 *Mar–Oct.* **www**.chateauvillandry.com

Villandry was the last great Renaissance château built in the Loire Valley, a perfect example of 16th-century architecture. Its gardens were restored to their original splendor early in the last century by Dr. Joachim Carvallo, whose grandson continues his work.

The result is a patchwork of sculpted shrubs and flowers on three levels: the kitchen garden *(jardin potager)*, the ornamental garden *(jardin d'ornement)*, and, on the highest level, the water garden *(jardin d'eau)*. There are signs to explain the history and meaning behind each plant: the marrow, for instance, symbolized fertility; the cabbage, sexual and spiritual corruption. Plants were also prized for their medicinal properties: cabbage was thought to help cure hangovers, while pimento aided digestion.

The delicate roots of the 32 miles (52 kms) of box hedge that outline and highlight each section mean that the whole 10 acres of gardens must be weeded by hand.

A *chocolatier* in Tours

Tours ⑬

Indre-et-Loire. 👥 *140,000.* ✈ 🚆 🚌 ℹ *78 rue Bernard Palissy (02 47 70 37 37).* ⛺ *Tue–Sun.* **www**.ligeris.com

Tours is the most appealing of the major Loire cities, thanks to bourgeois prosperity, an intelligent restoration program, and its university population. It is built on the site of a Roman town, and was a center of Christianity in the 4th century under St-Martin, bishop of Tours. In 1461 Louis XI made the city the French capital. However, during Henri IV's reign the city lost favor with the monarchy and the capital left Tours for Paris.

Bombarded by the Prussians in 1870, and bombed in World War II, Tours suffered extensive damage. By 1960, the middle classes had abandoned the historic center and it became a slum, full of

Cathédrale St-Gatien in Tours

crumbling medieval masonry. Regeneration of the city has succeeded due to the popular policies of Jean Royer, mayor of Tours from 1958 to 1996.

The pedestrianized **place Plumereau** is Tours' most atmospheric quarter, set in the medieval heart of the city and full of cafés, boutiques, and galleries. Streets such as rue Briçonnet reveal half-timbered façades, hidden courtyards, and crooked towers. A gateway leads to place St-Pierre-le-Puellier, a square with sunken Gallo-Roman remains and a Romanesque church converted into a café. A few streets away in place de Châteauneuf lies the Romanesque **Tour Charlemagne**, all that remains of St-Martin's first church. West of here is the highly yuppified artisans' quarter, centered on the rue du Petit St-Martin.

The **Cathédrale St-Gatien**, in the eastern sector of the city, was begun in the early 13th century and completed in the 16th. Its Flamboyant Gothic façade is blackened and crumbling but still truly impressive, as are the medieval stained-glass windows.

The **Musée des Beaux Arts**, set in the former archbishop's palace nearby, overlooks Classical gardens and a giant cedar of Lebanon. Its star exhibits are *Christ in the Garden of Olives* and *The Resurrection* by Mantegna, and a room devoted to the modern artist Olivier Debré.

Farther west, is the **Eglise St-Julien**, whose Gothic monastic cells and chapter-house contain a small wine museum. Next door, the **Musée du Compagnonnage** displays hundreds of finely created works by master craftsmen of the guilds. Across the rue Nationale lies the town's finest Renaissance building, the **Hôtel Goüin**, which houses the Touraine Archaeological history museum. It is closed until 2012.

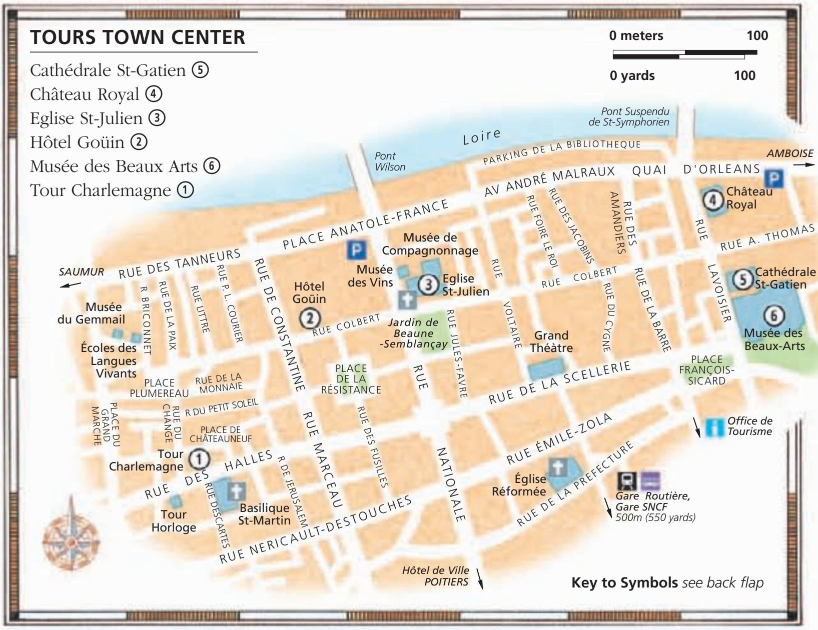
Musée des Beaux Arts
18 pl François Sicard. ***Tel*** *02 47 05 68 73.* ○ *Wed–Mon.* ● *Jan 1, May 1, Nov 1 & 11, Dec 25.* ✋

Musée du Compagnonnage
8 rue Nationale. ***Tel*** *02 47 21 62 20.* ○ *daily.* ● *Jan 1, May 1, Jul 14, Nov 1 & 11, Dec 25.* ✋ ♿

Environs

Just outside Céré la Ronde, on the D764 from Montrichard to Loches, lies the 15th-century **Château de Montpoupon** and its excellent Musée du Veneur, which looks at the important role of horses in hunting.

Backgammon players in Tours' place Plumereau

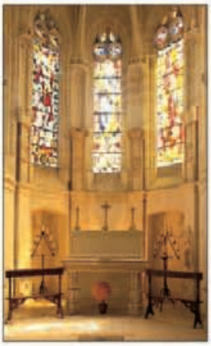


TOURS TOWN CENTER
Cathédrale St-Gatien ⑤
Château Royal ④
Eglise St-Julien ③
Hôtel Goüin ②
Musée des Beaux Arts ⑥
Tour Charlemagne ①
0 meters 100
0 yards 100
Loire
Pont Suspendu de St-Symphorien
Pont Wilson
PARKING DE LA BIBLIOTHEQUE
AMBOISE
AV ANDRÉ MALRAUX
QUAI D'ORLEANS
Château Royal
PLACE ANATOLE-FRANCE
Musée de Compagnonnage
Musée des Vins
Eglise St-Julien
Hôtel Goüin
RUE COLBERT
Jardin de Beaune -Semblançay
SAUMUR
RUE DES TANNEURS
Musée du Gemmail
Écoles des Langues Vivants
R BRICONNET
RUE DE LA PAIX
RUE LITTRE
RUE P. L. COURIER
RUE DE CONSTANTINE
PLACE PLUMEREAU
RUE DE LA MONNAIE
R DU PETIT SOLEIL
PLACE DU GRAND MARCHE
RUE DU CHANGE
PLACE DE CHÂTEAUNEUF
Tour Charlemagne
RUE DES HALLES
Tour Horloge
RUE DESCARTES
Basilique St-Martin
R DE JERUSALEM
RUE MARCEAU
RUE NERICAULT-DESTOUCHES
PLACE DE LA RÉSISTANCE
RUE DES FUSILLES
RUE NATIONALE
RUE JULES-FAVRE
RUE VOLTAIRE
RUE FOIRE LE ROI
RUE DES JACOBINS
RUE DES AMANDIERS
RUE COLBERT
RUE DU CYGNE
RUE DE LA BARRE
Grand Théâtre
RUE DE LA SCELLERIE
RUE LAVOISIER
RUE A. THOMAS
Cathédrale St-Gatien
Musée des Beaux-Arts
PLACE FRANÇOIS-SICARD
Office de Tourisme
RUE ÉMILE-ZOLA
Église Réformée
RUE DE LA PREFECTURE
Gare Routière, Gare SNCF 500m (550 yards)
Hôtel de Ville POITIERS
Key to Symbols see back flap

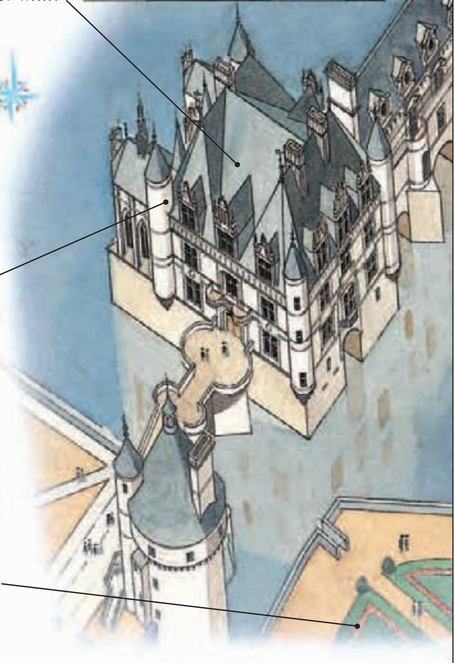
Château de Chenonceau ⑰

A romantic pleasure palace, Chenonceau was created from the Renaissance onwards by a series of aristocratic women. A magnificent avenue bordered by plane trees leads to symmetrical gardens and the serene vision that Flaubert praised as "floating on air and water." The château stretches across the river Cher with a 197-ft (60-m) gallery built over a series of arches, its elegant beauty reflected in the languid waters. The grandeur continues inside with splendidly furnished rooms, airy bedchambers, and fine paintings and tapestries.

Turreted Pavilion
This was built between 1513 and 1521 by Catherine Briçonnet and her husband, Thomas Bohier, over the foundations of an old water mill.



Chapelle
The chapel has a vaulted ceiling and pilasters sculpted with acanthus leaves and cockleshells. The stained glass, destroyed by a bomb in 1944, was replaced in 1953.



Catherine de' Medici's Garden
Lavish court receptions and transvestite balls were held under Catherine's auspices.

TIMELINE

1533 Marriage of Catherine de' Medici (1519–89) to Henri II (1519–59). Chenonceau becomes a Loire royal palace

1559 On Henri's death, Catherine forces the disgraced Diane to accept the Château de Chaumont in exchange for Chenonceau

Catherine de' Medici

1789 Chenonceau is spared in the French Revolution, thanks to Madame Dupin

1500 1600 1700 1800

1575 Louise de Lorraine (1554–1601) marries Henri III, Catherine's third and favorite son

1547 Henri II offers Chenonceau to Diane de Poitiers, his lifelong mistress

1513 Thomas Bohier acquires medieval Chenonceau. His wife, Catherine Briçonnet, rebuilds it in Renaissance style

1863 Madame Pelouze restores the château to its original state

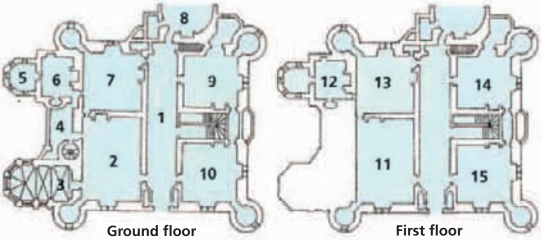
1730–99 Madame Dupin, a "farmer-general's" wife, makes Chenonceau a salon for writers and philosophers

VISITORS' CHECKLIST

🚉 *Chenonceaux.* 🚌 *from Tours.*
Tel 02 47 23 44 02. ○ *daily.* ✋
📷 ♿ *gr. fl. only.* 🍴 ✋ 🎧 🛍
Classical music: nightly Jul–Aug.
www.chenonceau.com

The Creation of Chenonceau

The women responsible for Chenonceau each left their mark. Catherine Briçonnet, wife of the first owner, built the turreted pavilion and one of the first straight staircases in France; Henri II's mistress, Diane de Poitiers, added the formal gardens and arched bridge over the river; Catherine de' Medici transformed the bridge into an Italian-style gallery (having evicted Diane following her husband's death in 1559); Louise de Lorraine, bereaved wife of Henri III, inherited the château in 1590 and painted the ceiling of her bedchamber black and white (the colors of royal mourning); Madame Dupin, a cultured 18th-century châtelaine, saved the château from destruction in the Revolution; and Madame Pelouze undertook a complete restoration in 1863.



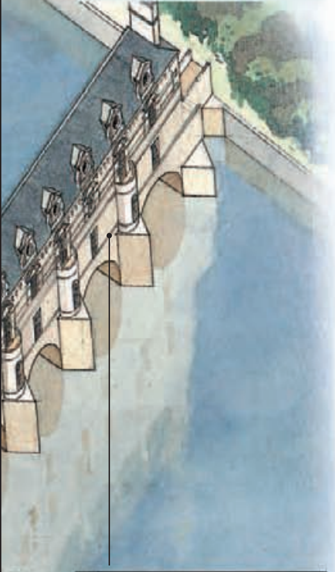
Ground floor

First floor

CHÂTEAU GUIDE

The main living area was in the square-shaped turreted pavilion in the middle of the river Cher. Four principal rooms open off the Vestibule on the ground floor: the Salle des Gardes and the Chambre de Diane de Poitiers, both hung with 16th-century Flemish tapestries; the Chambre de François I, with a Van Loo painting; and the Salon Louis XIV. On the first floor, reached via the Italianate staircase, are other sumptuous apartments including the Chambre de Catherine de' Médicis and the Chambre de Vendôme.

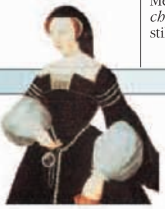
1	Vestibule
2	Salle des Gardes
3	Chapelle
4	Terrasse
5	Librairie de Catherine de' Médicis
6	Cabinet Vert
7	Chambre de Diane de Poitiers
8	Grande Galerie
9	Chambre de François I
10	Salon Louis XIV
11	Chambre des Cinq Reines
12	Cabinet des Estampes
13	Chambre de Catherine de' Médicis
14	Chambre de Vendôme
15	Chambre de Gabrielle d'Estrées



Grande Galerie
The elegant gallery crowning the bridge is Florentine in style, created by Catherine de' Medici from 1570–76.

1913 The château is bought by the Menier family, the *chocolatiers* who still own it today

1941 Chenonceau chapel is damaged in a bombing raid



Diane de Poitiers

Chambre de Catherine de' Médicis

Vouvray ⑭

Indre-et-Loire. 👥 *3,500.*
ℹ *12 rue Rabelais (02 47 52 68 73).*
⛺ *Tue & Fri.*

Just east of Tours is the village of Vouvray, home of the delicious white wine that Renaissance author Rabelais likened to taffeta.

Nothing has changed in the quality of Vouvray's wines. The star vineyard is **Huet** where, since 1990, grapes have been grown according to bio-dynamic methods: manual weeding, natural fertilizers, and no chemicals. In the preface to his novel *Quentin Durward,* Sir Walter Scott sang the praises of its dry white wines which are still to this day matured in chestnut barrels. Gaston Huet also hit the headlines in 1990 with his protests against the building of tracks for the TGV train over Vouvray vineyards. A French compromise was eventually reached and tunnels were built under the hilly vineyards.

The **Chateau de Montcontour**, where monks first planted vines in the 4th century, has its own wine-making museum in the impressive 10th-century cellars hewn out of the tufa rock.

Huet
11–13 rue de la Croix-Buisée.
Tel *02 47 52 78 87.* ○ *Jul–Aug: Mon–Sat for wine tastings; cellar visits by reservation only.*
● *public hols.*

⌂ Château de Moncontour
Route de Rochecorbon. ***Tel*** *02 47 52 60 77.* ○ *Easter–Sep: daily; Oct–before Easter: Mon–Fri.* ♿ ☞ *Visits can be followed by wine tastings.*
www.moncontour.com

Loches ⑮

Indre-et-Loire. 👥 *7,000.* 🚉 🚌
ℹ *pl de la Marne (02 47 91 82 82).*
⛺ *Wed & Sat.* **www**.loches-tourainecotesud.com

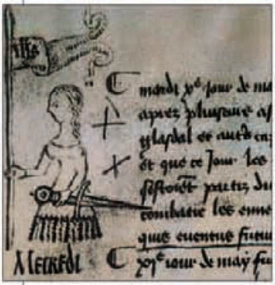
The medieval town of Loches

This unspoiled medieval town is removed from the château trail in the Indre valley. It is a backwater of late Gothic gateways and sculpted façades. Its keep has the deepest dungeons in the Loire. The Logis Royal is associated with Charles VII and his mistress Agnès Sorel. It is also where Joan of Arc pleaded with Charles to go to Reims and be crowned. Anne of Brittany's chapel is decorated with ermines, and contains an effigy of Agnès Sorel.

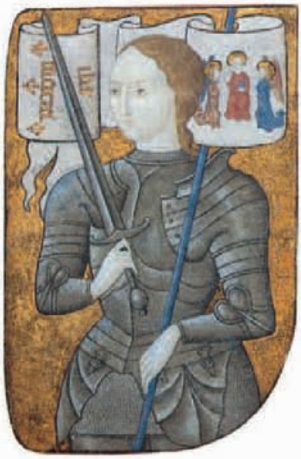
⌂ Logis Royal de Loches
Tel *02 47 59 01 32.* ○ *daily.*
● *Jan 1, Dec 25.* ♿ ☞

THE HEROINE OF FRANCE

Joan of Arc is the quintessential French national heroine, a virginal warrior, a woman martyr, a French figurehead. Her divinely led campaign to "drive the English out of France" during the Hundred Years' War has inspired plays, poetry, and movies from Voltaire to Cecil B. de Mille. Responding to heavenly voices, she appeared on the scene as champion of the dauphin, the uncrowned Charles VII. He faced an Anglo-Burgundian alliance which held most of northern France, and had escaped to the royal châteaux on the Loire. Joan convinced him of her mission, mustered the French troops, and in May 1429 led them to victory over the English at Orléans. She then urged the dithering Charles to go to Reims to be crowned. However, in 1430 she was captured and handed over to the English. Accused of witchcraft, she was burned at the stake in Rouen in 1431 at the age of 19. Her legendary bravery and tragic martyrdom led to her canonization in 1920.



Earliest known drawing of Joan of Arc (1429)



Portrait of Joan of Arc *in the Maison Jeanne d'Arc in Orléans* (see p312). *She saved the city from the English on May 8, 1429, a date the Orléannais still celebrate annually.*

Montrésor ⑯

Indre-et-Loire. 👥 *400.* ℹ *43 grande rue (02 47 92 70 71).* **www**.tourisme-valdindrois-montresor.com

Classed as one of "the most beautiful villages in France," Montrésor does not disappoint. It is set on the river Indrois, in the loveliest valley in Touraine. The village became a Polish enclave in the 1840s. In 1849 a Polish nobleman, Count Branicki, bought the 15th-century **Château**, built on the site of one of Foulques Nerra's 11th-century fortifications. It has remained in the family ever since, its interior unchanged.

Farm building and poppy fields near the village of Montrésor

Château de Montrésor
Tel *02 47 92 60 04.* ○ *Apr–11 Nov: daily; Dec–Mar: Sat & Sun pms.* ♿

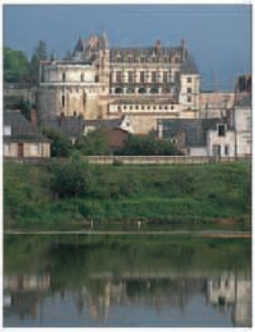
Château de Chenonceau ⑰

See pp288–9.

Amboise ⑱

Indre-et-Loire. 👥 *12,000.* 🚆 🚌 ℹ *quai du Général de Gaulle (02 47 57 09 28).* *Fri & Sun am.*
www.amboise-valdeloire.com

Few buildings are more historically important than the **Château d'Amboise**. Louis XI lived here; Charles VIII was born and died here; François I was brought up here, as were Catherine de' Medici's 10 children. The château was also the setting for the 1560 Amboise Conspiracy, an ill-fated Huguenot plot against François II. Visitors are shown the metal lacework balcony which served as a gibbet for 12 of the 1,200 conspirators who were put to death. The **Tour des Minimes**, the château's original entrance, is famous for its huge spiral ramp up which horsemen could ride to deliver provisions.

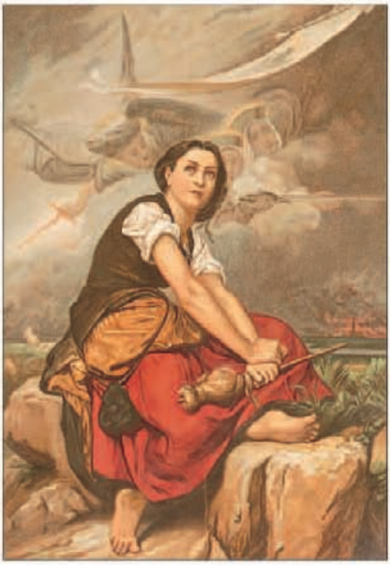


Amboise seen from the Loire

On the ramparts is the beautifully restored Gothic **Chapelle St-Hubert**, Leonardo da Vinci's burial place. Under the patronage of François I, the artist lived in the nearby manor house of **Clos-Lucé,** whose gardens exhibit models of Leonardo's inventions constructed from his sketches.

Château d'Amboise
Tel *08 20 20 50 50.* ○ *daily.*
● *1 Jan, 25 Dec.*
www.chateau-amboise.com

Clos-Lucé
2 rue de Clos-Lucé. ***Tel*** *02 47 57 00 73.*
○ *daily* ● *1 Jan, 25 Dec* ♿ restricted. **www**.vinci-closluce.com



A romantic heroine, *Joan of Arc was a popular subject for artists. This painting of her is by François Léon Benouville (1821–59).*

Burned at the stake – *a scene from* St. Joan, *Otto Preminger's 1957 epic movie, which starred Jean Seberg.*

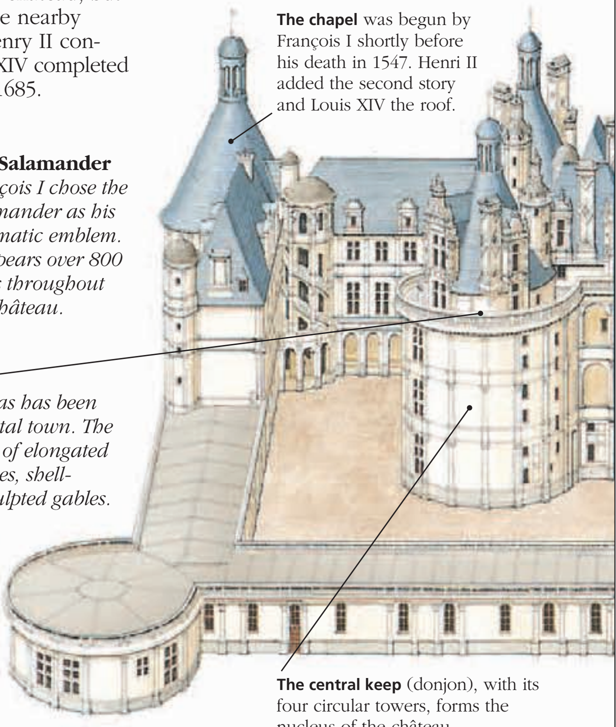
Château de Chambord ⑲

Henry James once said, "Chambord is truly royal – royal in its great scale, its grand air, and its indifference to common considerations." The Loire's largest residence, brainchild of the extravagant François I, began as a hunting lodge in the Forêt de Boulogne. In 1519 this was razed and the creation of present-day Chambord began, to a design probably initiated by Leonardo da Vinci. By 1537 the towers, keep, and terraces had been completed by 1,800 men and three master masons. At one point, François suggested diverting the Loire to flow in front of his château, but he settled for redirecting the nearby Cosson instead. His son Henry II continued his work, and Louis XIV completed the 440-roomed edifice in 1685.

The Château de Chambord with the river Cosson, a tributary of the Loire, in the foreground

The Salamander

François I chose the salamander as his enigmatic emblem. It appears over 800 times throughout the château.



The chapel was begun by François I shortly before his death in 1547. Henri II added the second story and Louis XIV the roof.

★ Roof Terraces

This skyline of delicate cupolas has been likened to a miniature Oriental town. The roof terraces include a forest of elongated chimney pots, miniature spires, shell-shaped domes, and richly sculpted gables.

The central keep (donjon), with its four circular towers, forms the nucleus of the château.

STAR FEATURES

- ★ Roof Terraces
- ★ Vaulted Guardrooms
- ★ Grand Staircase

TIMELINE

1519–47 The Count of Blois' hunting lodge demolished by François I and the château created

1547–59 Henri II adds the west wing and second story of the chapel

1725–33 Inhabited by Stanislas Leczinski, exiled king of Poland who was made duke of Lorraine

1748 The Maréchal de Saxe acquires Chambord. On his death two years later, the château yet again falls into decline

1500 | 1600 | 1700 | 1800 | 1900

1547 Death of François I

1669–85 Louis XIV completes the building, then abandons it

1670 Molière's *Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme* staged at Chambord

Molière

1840 Chambord declared a *Monument Historique*

1970s Chambord is restored and refurnished and the moats re-dug.

★ Vaulted Guardrooms

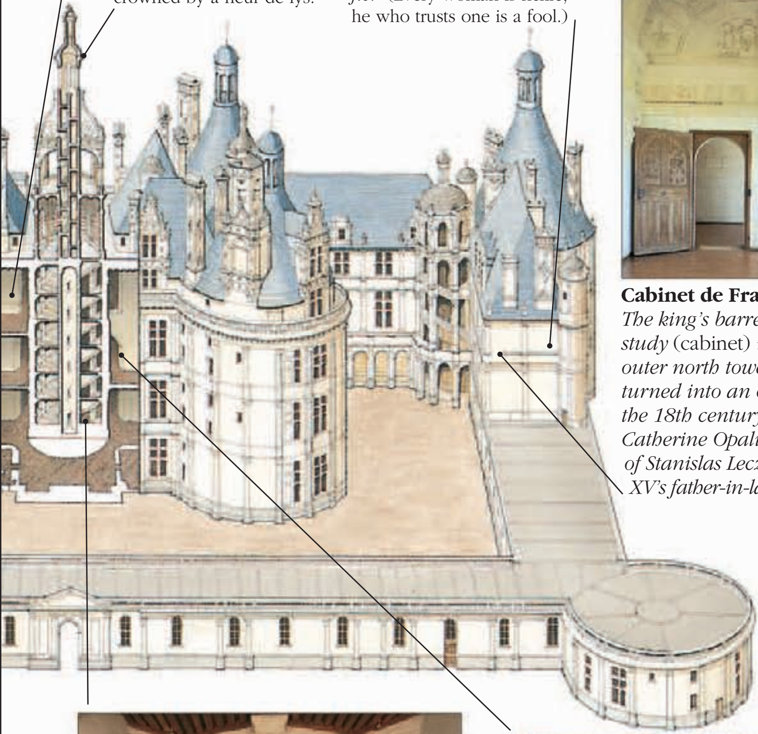
Arranged in the form of a Greek cross around the Grand Staircase, the vaulted guardrooms were once the setting for royal balls and plays. Their ceilings are decorated with François I's initials and salamander motif.

The lantern tower is 105 ft (32 m) high. Surmounting the terrace, it is supported by arched buttresses and crowned by a fleur-de-lys.

François I's Bedchamber is where the king, hurt by a failed romance, scratched a message on a pane of glass: " *Souvent femme varie, bien fol est qui s'y fie.*" (Every woman is fickle, he who trusts one is a fool.)

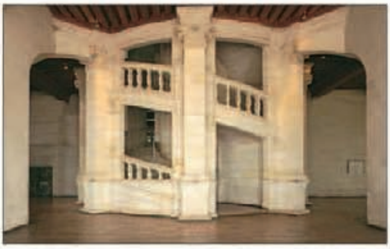
VISITORS' CHECKLIST

🚆 Blois, then taxi or bus. ***Tel*** *02 54 50 40 00.* ○ *Apr–mid-Jul & mid-Aug–Sep: 9am–6:15pm daily; mid-Jul–mid-Aug: 9am–7:30pm; Oct–Mar: 9am–5:15pm.* ● *Jan 1, May 1, Dec 25.* ♿ 📷 ☞ **Son et Lumière** *"Rêve de Lumières" (sound and light show) Jul–mid-Sep: nightly.* **www**.chambord.org



Cabinet de François I

The king's barrel-vaulted study (cabinet) *in the outer north tower was turned into an oratory in the 18th century by Queen Catherine Opalinska, wife of Stanislas Leczinski (Louis XV's father-in-law).*



★ Grand Staircase

This innovative double-helix staircase was supposedly designed by Leonardo da Vinci. It ensures that the person going up and the person going down cannot meet.

Louis XIV's Bedchamber

Louis XIV's bedchamber lies within the Sun King's state apartments, the grandest quarters in the château.

Blois's Cathédrale St-Louis and Hôtel de Ville seen from across the Loire

Blois ⑳

Loir-et-Cher. 👥 *60,000.* 🚉 🚌
ℹ *23 pl du château (02 54 90 41 41).* ⛺ *Tue, Thu & Sat.*
www.ville-blois.fr

Once a fief of the counts of Blois, the town rose to prominence as a royal domain in the 15th century, retaining its historic façades and refined atmosphere to this day. Architectural interest abounds in Vieux Blois, the hilly, partially pedestrianized quarter enclosed by the château, cathedral, and river. Four well-signposted walking tours act as a gentle introduction to the noble mansions and romantic courtyards that grace the Loire's most beguiling town.

Set back from the north bank of the river, the **Château Royal de Blois** was the principal royal residence until Henri IV moved the court to Paris in 1598 – Louis XIV's creation of Versailles *(see pp174–7)* was to mark the final eclipse of Blois. The château's four contrasting wings make a harmonious whole. The Salle des Etats Generaux, the only part of the building surviving from the 13th century, housed the council and court; it is the largest and best-preserved Gothic hall in France. The adjoining late 15th-century Louis XII wing infuses Gothic design with Renaissance spirit, sealed with the king's porcupine symbol and motto.

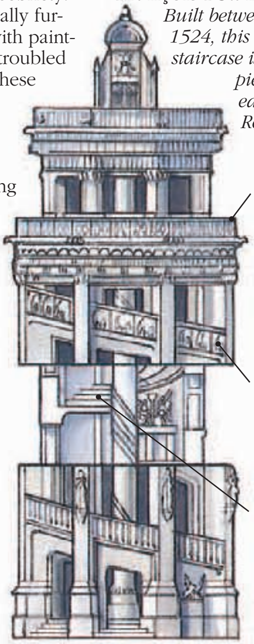
The 16th-century François I wing is a masterpiece of the French Renaissance containing a monumental spiral staircase in an octagonal tower. By contrast, the 17th-century Gaston d'Orléans wing is a model of Classical sobriety.

Blois is authentically furnished and hung with paintings portraying its troubled and bloody past. These include a graphic portrayal of the murder of the Duc de Guise in 1588. Suspected of heading a Catholic plot against Henri III, he was stabbed to death by guards in the king's chamber. The most intriguing room is Catherine de' Medici's study where, of the 237 carved wooden wall panels, four are secret cabinets said to have stored her poisons.

King Louis XII's porcupine symbol

François I Staircase

Built between 1515 and 1524, this octagonal staircase is a masterpiece of the early French Renaissance.



The gallery provided an ideal setting for viewing jousts and receptions held in the inner courtyard.

François I's salamander motif adorns the openwork balustrades.

The staircase within the tower slopes appreciably more steeply than the balustrades.

Louis XII wing of the Château Royal de Blois

Dominating the eastern sector of the city, the **Cathédrale St-Louis** is a 17th-century reconstruction of a Gothic church that was almost completely destroyed by a hurricane in 1678. Behind the cathedral the former bishop's palace, built in 1700, is the **Hôtel de Ville** (town hall). The surrounding terraced gardens have lovely views over the city and river. Opposite the cathedral is the **Maison des Acrobates**, carved with characters from medieval farces including acrobats and jugglers.

Place Louis-XII, the marketplace, is overlooked by splendid 17th-century façades, balconies, and half-timbered houses. Rue Pierre de Blois, a quaint alley straddled by a Gothic passageway, winds downhill to the medieval Jewish ghetto. The rue des Juifs boasts several distinguished *hôtels particuliers* (mansions), including the galleried **Hôtel de Condé**, with its Renaissance archway and courtyard, and the **Hôtel Jassaud**, with magnificent 16th-century low reliefs above the main doorway. On the rue du Puits-Châtel, also rich in Renaissance mansions, is the galleried **Hôtel Sardini**, once owned by Renaissance bankers.

Place Vauvert is the most charming square in Vieux Blois, with a fine example of a half-timbered house.

⌂ Château Royal de Blois
Tel *02 54 90 33 33.* ○ *9am–12:30pm, 1:30–5:30pm daily (9am–6:30pm Apr–Sep).* ● *Jan 1, Dec 25.* ■ ■ **Son et Lumière** *Jun–mid-Sep.*

Covered Gothic passageway in Rue Pierre de Blois

The nave of the abbey church of Notre-Dame in Beaugency

Beaugency ㉑

Loiret. 👥 *7,500.* 🚂 🚌 ℹ *3 pl de Docteur-Hyvernaud (02 38 44 54 42).* 🛒 *Sat.* **www**.beaugency.fr

Beaugency has long been the eastern gateway to the Loire. This compact medieval town makes a peaceful base for exploring the Orléanais region. Exceptionally for the Loire, it is possible to walk along the river banks and stone *levées*. At quai de l'Abbaye there is a good view of the 11th-century bridge which, until modern times, was the only crossing point between Blois and Orléans. An obvious target for enemy attack, it was captured four times by the English during the Hundred Years' War before being retaken by Joan of Arc in 1429.

The town center is dominated by a ruined 11th-century watchtower. It stands on **place St-Firmin**, along with a 16th-century belltower (the church was destroyed in the Revolution) and a statue of Joan of Arc. Period houses line the square. Farther down is the **Château Dunois**, built on the site of the feudal castle by one of Joan of Arc's *compagnon d'armes*. Its regional museum features an array of costumes, furniture, and antique toys. Facing the Château Dunois is **Notre-Dame**, a Romanesque abbey church that witnessed the annulment of the marriage between Eleanor of Aquitaine and Louis VII in 1152, leaving Eleanor free to marry the future Henry II of England.

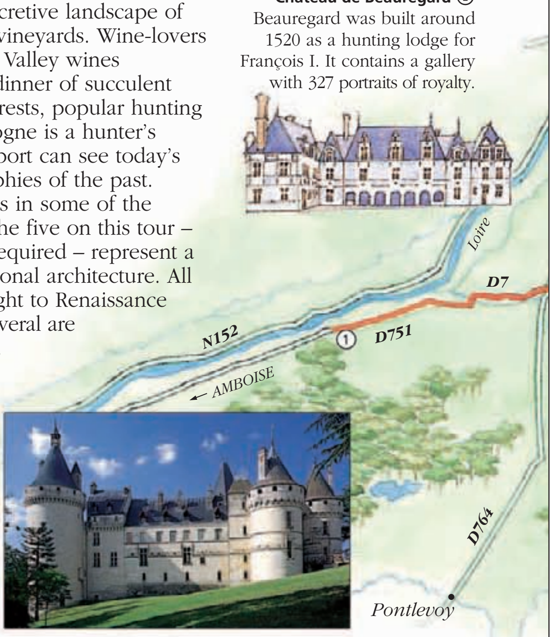
Nearby is the medieval clocktower in rue du Change and the Renaissance **Hôtel de Ville**, with its façade adorned with the town's arms. Equally charming is the nearby ancient mill district, around the rue du Pont and the rue du Rü, with its streams and riot of flowers.

⌂ Château Dunois (Musée Daniel Vannier)
3 pl Dunois. ***Tel*** *02 38 44 54 42.* ● *until 2010.* ■ ■ *obligatory.*

Châteaux Tour of the Sologne

The mysterious Sologne is a secretive landscape of woods and marshes edged by vineyards. Wine-lovers can indulge in tastings of Loire Valley wines accompanied, in season, by a dinner of succulent wild game from the region's forests, popular hunting grounds for centuries. The Sologne is a hunter's paradise and devotees of the sport can see today's hounds, as well as hunting trophies of the past.

This ambling rural route takes in some of the Loire's most varied châteaus. The five on this tour – for which a couple of days is required – represent a delightful encapsulation of regional architecture. All styles are here, from feudal might to Renaissance grace and Classical elegance. Several are inhabited but can still be visited.



Château de Beauregard ②
Beauregard was built around 1520 as a hunting lodge for François I. It contains a gallery with 327 portraits of royalty.

Château de Chaumont ①
Chaumont is a feudal castle with Renaissance embellishments and lofty views over the river Loire *(see p242).*

0 kilometers **5**

0 miles **5**

KEY

- 🟥 Tour route
- ═ Other roads

Vendôme ㉒

Loir-et-Cher. 👥 *18,500.* 🚆 🚌
ℹ *47 rue Poterie (02 54 77 05 07).*
Fri & Sun. **www**.vendome.eu

Once an important stop for pilgrims en route to Compostela in Spain, Vendôme is still popular with modern pilgrims, thanks to the TGV rail service. Though a desirable address with Parisian commuters, the town still manages to retain its provincial charm. Vendôme's old stone buildings are encircled by the river Loir, its lush gardens and chic restaurants reflected in the water.

The town's greatest monument is the abbey church of **La Trinité**, founded in 1034. Its Romanesque belltower (all that remains of the original structure) is overshadowed by the church portal, a masterpiece of Flamboyant Gothic tracery. The interior is embellished with Romanesque capitals and 15th-century choir stalls.

Commanding a rocky spur high above the Loir is the ruined **château**, built by the counts of Vendôme in the 13th–14th centuries. Down below, rowing boats may be rented for gently exploring the meandering backwaters of the Loir, past a medieval *lavoir*, elegant buildings, and a plane tree planted in 1759.

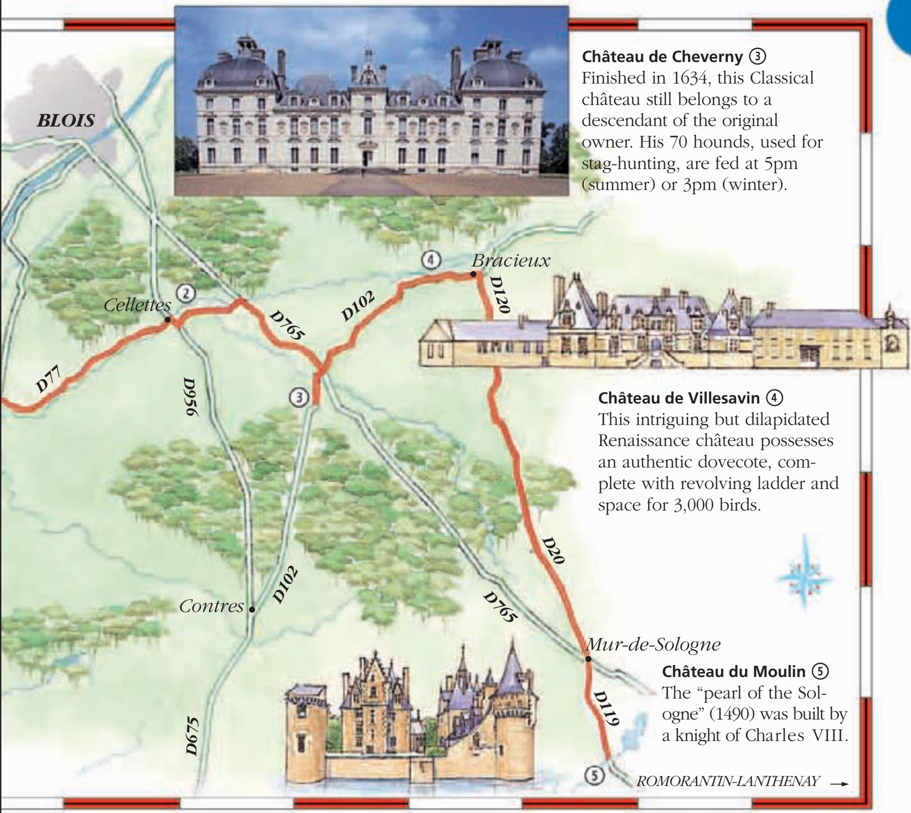
Vendôme's native son Rochambeau, hero of the American Revolution

The Loir ㉓

Loir-et-Cher. ✈ Tours. 🚆 *Vendôme.*
🚌 *Montoire-sur-le-Loir.* ℹ *16 pl Clémenceau, Montoire-sur-le-Loir (02 54 85 23 30).*

Compared with the royal river Loire, the tranquil Loir to the north has a more rural charm. The stretch between Vendôme and Trôo is the most rewarding, offering troglodyte caves *(see p292)*, walking trails, wine-tasting, fishing, and boat trips.

Les Roches-l'Evêque is a fortified village with cave dwellings visible in the cliff-face. Just downstream is **Lavardin**, with its Romanesque church, half-timbered houses, Gothic bridge and ruined château ringed by ramparts. In **Montoire-sur-le-Loir**, the Chapelle St-Gilles, a former leper colony, has Romanesque frescoes. **Trôo**, the next major village, is known for its Romanesque Eglise de St-Martin and a laby-



Château de Cheverny ③
Finished in 1634, this Classical château still belongs to a descendant of the original owner. His 70 hounds, used for stag-hunting, are fed at 5pm (summer) or 3pm (winter).

Château de Villesavin ④
This intriguing but dilapidated Renaissance château possesses an authentic dovecote, complete with revolving ladder and space for 3,000 birds.

Château du Moulin ⑤
The "pearl of the Sologne" (1490) was built by a knight of Charles VIII.

rinth of troglodyte dwellings. **St-Jacques-des-Guérets**, facing the village of Trôo, has a frescoed Romanesque chapel, as does **Poncé-sur-le-Loir**, farther downstream. On the slopes are vineyards producing Jasnières and Côteaux du Vendômois. Wine-tastings enliven sleepy **Poncé** and **La Chartre-sur-le-Loir**. The cliffs on the opposite bank are studded with caves, commonly used as wine cellars.

Northward, the **Forêt de Bercé** abounds with paths and streams, while to the west the small town of **Le Lude** sits on the south bank of the Loir, dominated by its romantic 15th-century château.

Some 12 miles (20 km) west of Le Lude lies the town of **La Flèche**, whose main attraction is the Prytanée Nationale Militaire, originally a Jesuit college founded by Henri IV in 1603. Philosopher René Descartes was one of the college's earliest and most illustrious pupils.

Chartres ㉔

Eure-et-Loir. 👥 *42,400.* 🚉 🚌
ℹ *pl de la Cathédrale (02 37 18 26 26).* 🛒 *Tue, Wed, Thu, Sat, Sun.*
www.chartres-tourisme.com

Chartres has the greatest Gothic cathedral in Europe *(see pp308–11)*, and its churches should not be ignored. The Benedictine abbey church of **St-Pierre** has lovely medieval stained-glass windows, while **St-Aignan** abuts 9th-century ramparts. By the river is the Romanesque **Eglise de St-André**, a deconsecrated church used for art exhibitions and concerts. The **Musée des Beaux Arts**, in the former episcopal palace, offers a fine collection of 17th and 18th-century furniture, Renaissance enamels, and paintings by Vlaminck.

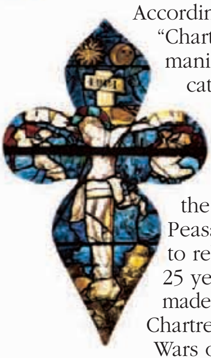
As one of the first urban conservation sites in France, Chartres is a success story. Quirky half-timbered houses abound along such cobbled streets as the rue des Ecuyers. Steep staircases known as *tertres* lead down to the river Eure providing views of mills, humpback stone bridges, washhouses, and the cathedral.

One of the many washhouses along the Eure river

In the Grenier de Loens, next to the cathedral, is the Centre International du Vitraux. The building's 13th-century vaulted storerooms are also used for temporary exhibitions.

🏛 Musée des Beaux Arts
29 cloître Notre-Dame. ***Tel*** *02 37 90 45 80.* ○ *Wed–Mon.* ● *Sun am, and Jan 1, May 1 & 8, Nov 1 & 11, Dec 25.* 🚫 ♿

Chartres Cathedral



Part of the Vendôme Window

According to art historian Emile Male, "Chartres is the mind of the Middle Ages manifest." Begun in 1020, the Romanesque cathedral was destroyed by fire in 1194. Only the north and south towers, south steeple, west portal, and crypt remained; the sacred *Veil of the Virgin* relic was the sole treasure to survive. Peasant and lord alike helped to rebuild the church in just 25 years. Few alterations were made after 1250 and, fortunately, Chartres was unscathed by the Wars of Religion and the French Revolution. The result is a Gothic cathedral with a true "Bible in stone" reputation.

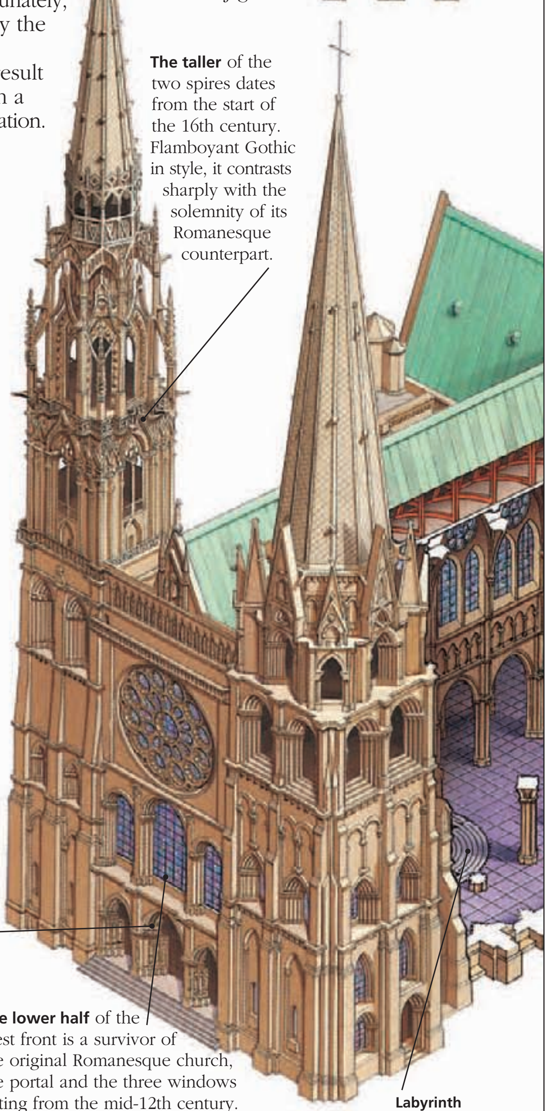
Elongated Statues
These statues on the Royal Portal represent Old Testament figures.

STAR FEATURES

- ★ Stained-Glass Windows
- ★ South Porch
- ★ Royal Portal

Gothic Nave
As wide as the Romanesque crypt below it, the nave reaches a lofty height of 121 ft (37 m).

★ Royal Portal
The central tympanum of the Royal Portal (1145–55) shows Christ in Majesty.



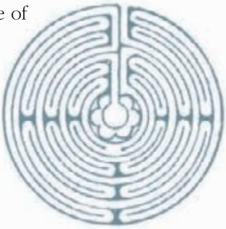
The taller of the two spires dates from the start of the 16th century. Flamboyant Gothic in style, it contrasts sharply with the solemnity of its Romanesque counterpart.

The lower half of the west front is a survivor of the original Romanesque church, the portal and the three windows dating from the mid-12th century.

Labyrinth

THE LABYRINTH

The 13th-century labyrinth, inlaid in the nave floor, was a feature of most medieval cathedrals. Pilgrims followed the tortuous route on their knees, echoing the way to Jerusalem and the complexity of life, in order to reach Christ. The journey – 851 ft (262 m) of broken concentric circles – took at least one hour.

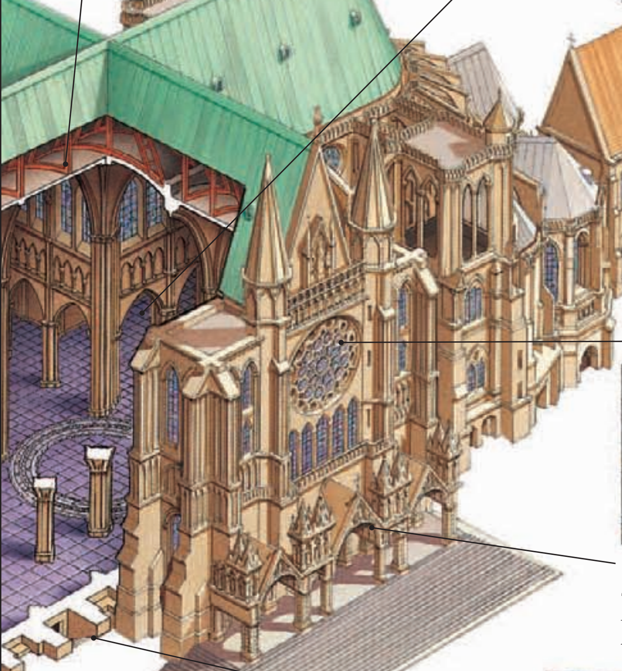


VISITORS' CHECKLIST

Pl de la Cathédrale. ***Tel*** *02 37 21 75 02.* ○ *8:30am–7:30pm daily.* ✝ *9am Tue & Fri; 11:45am & 6:15pm Mon –Sat (6pm Sat); 9:15am (in Latin), 11am & 6pm (crypt) Sun.* 📷 ♿ ✋ 🛍
www.cathedrale-chartres.com

Vaulted Ceiling
A network of ribs supports the vaulted ceiling.

Our Lady of the Pillar
Carved from dark pear wood, this 16th-century replica of a 13th-century statue is a striking shrine which is often surrounded by candles.



★ Stained-Glass Windows
The windows cover a surface area of over 28,000 sq ft (2,600 sq m).

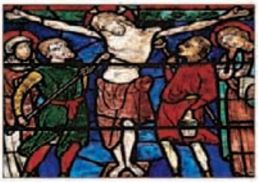
★ South Porch
Sculpture on the South Porch (1197–1209) reflects New Testament teaching.

The Crypt
This is the largest crypt in France, most of it dating from the early 11th century. It houses the Veil of the Virgin *relic and comprises two galleries, a series of chapels, and the 9th-century St-Lubin's vault.*

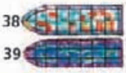
The Stained Glass of Chartres

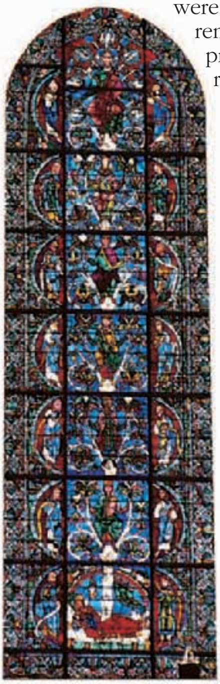
Donated by royalty, aristocracy, priests, and the merchant brotherhoods between 1210 and 1240, this glorious collection of stained glass is world-renowned. Around 176 windows illustrate biblical stories and daily life in the 13th century. During both World Wars the windows were dismantled piece by piece and removed for safety. There is an ongoing program, begun in the 1970s, to restore the windows in the cathedral.

Stained glass above the apse

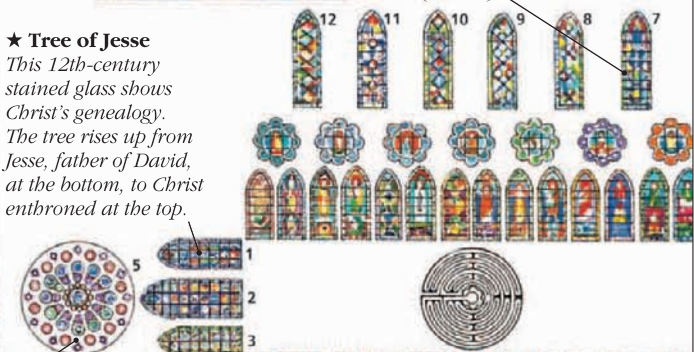


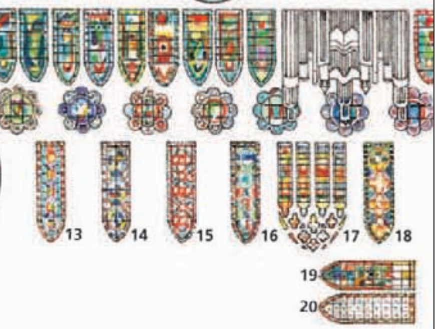
Redemption Window
Six scenes illustrate Christ's Passion *and death on the Cross (c.1210).*

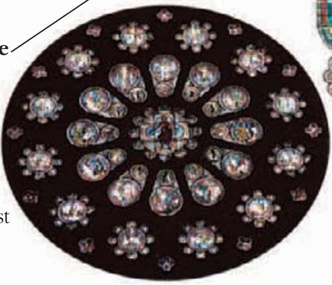




★ Tree of Jesse
This 12th-century stained glass shows Christ's genealogy. The tree rises up from Jesse, father of David, at the bottom, to Christ enthroned at the top.



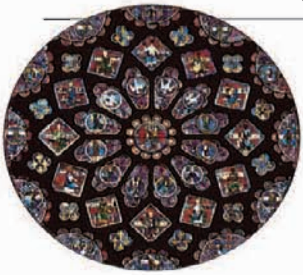




★ West Rose Window
This window (1215), with Christ seated in the center, shows the Last Judgment.

KEY

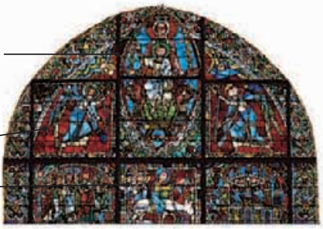
1 Tree of Jesse
2 Incarnation
3 Passion and Resurrection
4 North Rose Window
5 West Rose Window
6 South Rose Window
7 Redemption Window
8 St. Nicholas
9 Joseph
10 St. Eustache
11 St. Lubin
12 Noah
13 St. John the Evangelist
14 Mary Magdalene
15 Good Samaritan and Adam and Eve
16 Assumption
17 Vendôme Chapel Windows
18 Miracles of Mary
19 St. Apollinaris
20 Modern Window
21 St. Fulbert
22 St. Anthony and St. Paul
23 Blue Virgin
24 Life of the Virgin
25 Zodiac Window
26 St. Martin
27 St. Thomas Becket
28 St. Margaret and St. Catherine
29 St. Nicholas
30 St. Remy
31 St. James the Greater
32 Charlemagne
33 St. Theodore and St. Vincent
34 St. Stephen
35 St. Cheron
36 St. Thomas
37 Peace Window
38 Modern Window
39 Prodigal Son
40 Ezekiel and David
41 Aaron
42 Annunciation-Visitation
43 Isaiah and Moses
44 Daniel and Jeremiah



North Rose Window
This depicts the Glorification of the Virgin*, surrounded by the kings of Judah and the prophets (c.1230).*

GUIDE TO READING THE WINDOWS

Each window is divided into panels, usually read from left to right, bottom to top (earth to heaven). The number of figures or abstract shapes used is thought to be symbolic: three stands for divinity, while the number four symbolizes the material world or the four elements.

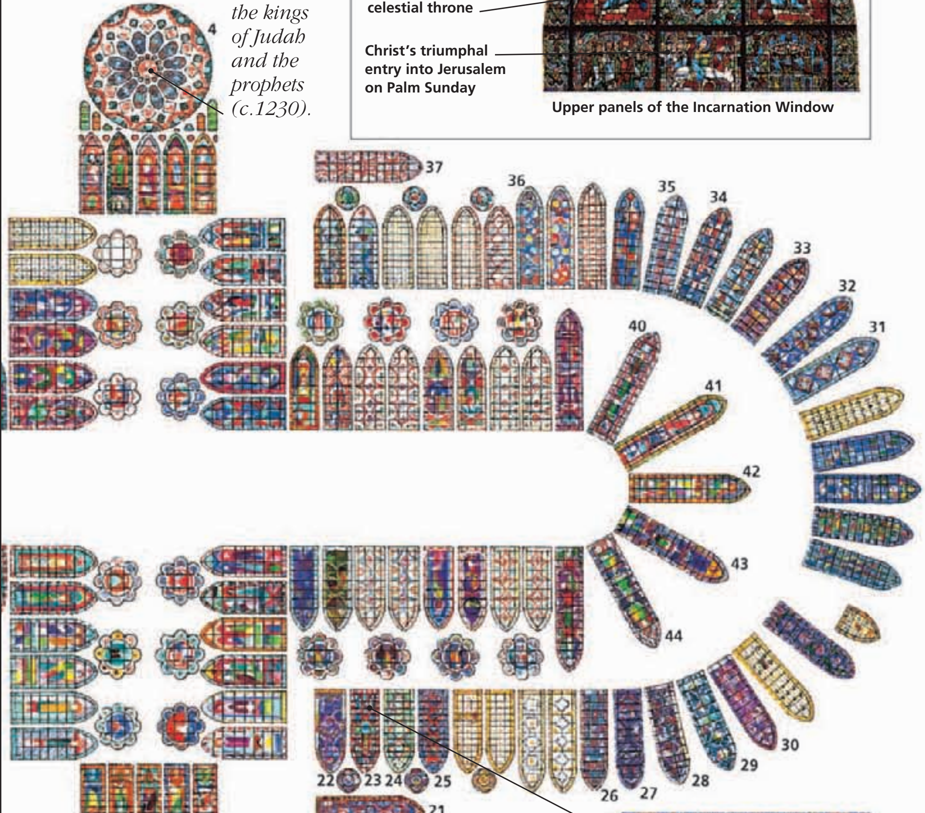


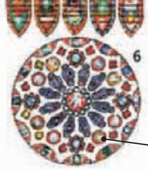
Mary and Child in the sacred mandorla (c.1150)

Two angels doing homage before the celestial throne

Christ's triumphal entry into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday

Upper panels of the Incarnation Window



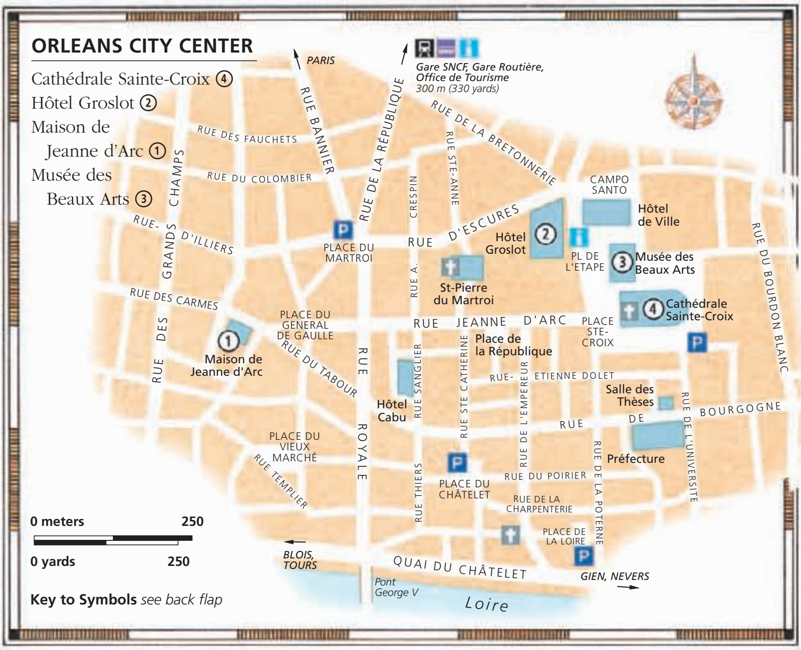


South Rose Window
This illustrates the Apocalypse, *with* Christ in Majesty *(c.1225).*

STAR WINDOWS

- ★ West Rose Window
- ★ Tree of Jesse
- ★ Blue Virgin Window

★ Blue Virgin Window
The window's bottom panel depicts the conversion of water into wine by Christ at The Marriage at Cana.


ORLEANS CITY CENTER
Cathédrale Sainte-Croix ④
Hôtel Groslot ②
Maison de Jeanne d'Arc ①
Musée des Beaux Arts ③
PARIS
Gare SNCF, Gare Routière, Office de Tourisme 300 m (330 yards)
RUE BANNIER
RUE DE LA RÉPUBLIQUE
RUE DE LA BRETONNERIE
RUE DES FAUCHETS
RUE DU COLOMBIER
RUE DES GRANDS CHAMPS
RUE D'ILLIERS
RUE DES CARMES
RUE CRESPIN
RUE STE-ANNE
RUE D'ESCURES
PLACE DU MARTROI
RUE A.
St-Pierre du Martroi
Hôtel Groslot
PL DE L'ETAPE
CAMPO SANTO
Hôtel de Ville
Musée des Beaux Arts
Cathédrale Sainte-Croix
PLACE STE-CROIX
RUE JEANNE D'ARC
PLACE DU GENERAL DE GAULLE
Maison de Jeanne d'Arc
RUE DU TABOUR
RUE ROYALE
RUE SANGLIER
Hôtel Cabu
RUE STE CATHERINE
Place de la République
RUE ETIENNE DOLET
RUE DE L'EMPEREUR
Salle des Thèses
RUE DE BOURGOGNE
RUE DU BOURDON BLANC
RUE DE L'UNIVERSITE
Préfecture
PLACE DU VIEUX MARCHÉ
RUE TEMPLIER
RUE THIERS
PLACE DU CHÂTELET
RUE DU POIRIER
RUE DE LA CHARPENTERIE
RUE DE LA POTERNE
PLACE DE LA LOIRE
0 meters 250
0 yards 250
BLOIS, TOURS
QUAI DU CHÂTELET
Pont George V
Loire
GIEN, NEVERS
Key to Symbols see back flap

Orléans' Cathédrale Sainte-Croix

Orléans ㉕

Loiret. 112,500. ✈ 🚆 🚌
ℹ 2 pl Etape (02 38 24 05 05).
Tue–Sun. **www**.tourisme-orleans.com

Orleans' dazzling new bridge symbolizes the city's increasing importance at the geographic heart of both France and Europe. As a tourist, however, one is struck by the city's continued attachment to its past, most particularly to Joan of Arc. It was from here that the Maid of Orléans saved France from the English in 1429 *(see p300)*. Since her martyrdom at Rouen in 1431, Joan remains a presence in Orléans. Every April 29 and May 1, 7, and 8 her liberation of the city is re-enacted in a pageant and a blessing in the cathedral.

Orléans' historic center was badly damaged in World War II, but much has been reconstructed, and a faded grandeur lingers in Vieil Orléans, the quarter bounded by the cathedral, the river Loire, and the **place du Martroi**. The latter, a Classical but rather windswept square, has an equestrian statue of the city's heroine. Nearby the half-timbered **Maison de Jeanne d'Arc** was rebuilt from period dwellings in 1961 on the site where Joan had lodgings in 1429.

From place du Martroi, the rue d'Escures leads past Renaissance mansions to the cathedral. **Hôtel Groslot** is the grandest, a 16th-century red-brick mansion where kings Charles IX, Henri III, and Henri IV all stayed. The 17-year-old François II died here in 1560 after attending a meeting of the Etats Généraux with his child-bride, Mary, later Queen of Scots. The building served as Orléans' town hall from 1790 to 1982, and the sumptuously decorated interior, with its Joan memorabilia, is still used for marriages and official ceremonies.

Virtually opposite the Hôtel Groslot and alongside the new town hall is the **Musée des Beaux Arts**, displaying European works of art from the 16th to the 20th centuries.

The **Cathédrale Sainte-Croix** nearby is an imposing edifice begun in the late 13th century, destroyed by the Huguenots (Protestants) in 1568, and then rebuilt in supposedly Gothic style between the 17th and 19th centuries.

Hôtel Groslot

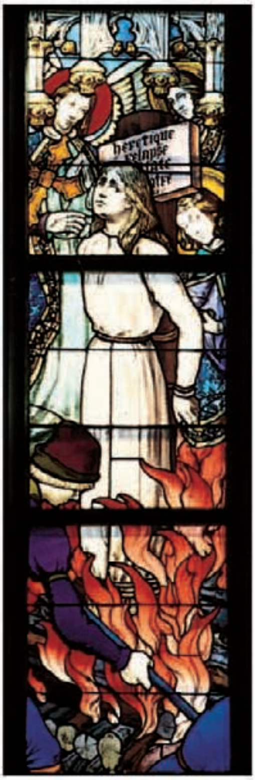
Pl de l'Etape. ***Tel*** *02 38 79 22 30.*
○ *daily.* ● *sporadically.*

Musée des Beaux Arts

Pl Ste-Croix. ***Tel*** *02 38 79 21 55.* ○ *Tue–Sat & Sun pm.*
● *Jan 1, May 1, Nov 1, Dec 25.*
free 1st Sun of month. ♿

Maison de Jeanne d'Arc

3 pl du Général de Gaulle. ***Tel*** *02 38 52 99 89.* ○ *Tue–Sun.* ● *Jan 1, May 1 & 8, Nov 1, Dec 25; Nov–Apr: ams.* *free 2nd Sun of month.*



Joan of Arc stained-glass window in Orléans' Cathédrale Sainte-Croix

St-Benoît-sur-Loire ㉖

Loiret. 👥 *2,000.* 🚌 ℹ *44 rue Orléanaise (02 38 35 79 00).* **www**.saint-benoit-sur-loire.fr

Situated along the river Loire between Orléans and Gien, St-Benoît-sur-Loire boasts one of the finest Romanesque abbey churches in France (1067–1108). It is all that survives of an important monastery founded in AD 650 and named after St Benedict, patron saint of Europe. His relics were brought from Italy at the end of the 7th century.

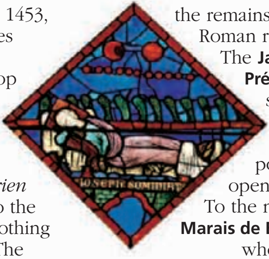
The church's belfry porch is graced with carved capitals depicting biblical scenes. The nave is tall and light, and the choir floor is an amazing patchwork of Italian marble. Daily services with Gregorian chant are open to the public.

Bourges ㉗

Cher. 👥 *80,000.* 🚆 🚌 ℹ *21 rue Victor Hugo (02 48 23 02 60).* ⊜ *Tue–Sun.* **www**.ville-bourges.fr

This Gallo-Roman city retains its original walls but is best known as the city of Jacques Coeur, financier and foreign minister to Charles VII. The greatest merchant of the Middle Ages and a self-made man *par excellence*, it was in his capacity as an arms dealer that he established a tradition maintained for four centuries, since Napoléon III had cannons manufactured here in 1862.

Built over part of the walls, the **Palais Jacques Coeur** is a Gothic gem and a lasting memorial to its first master. It was finished in 1453, and incorporates Coeur's two emblems, scallop shells and hearts, as well as his motto: *"A vaillan coeur, rien impossible"* – to the valiant heart, nothing is impossible. The obligatory tour reveals a barrel-vaulted gallery, a painted chapel and a chamber that had Turkish baths.



Stained-glass window in the Cathédrale St-Etienne

Bourges also flourishes as a university town and cultural mecca, renowned for its spring festival of music.

Rue Bourbonnoux leads to **St-Etienne**, the widest Gothic cathedral in France and the one most similar to Paris's Notre-Dame. The west façade has five sculpted portals, the central one depicting an enthralling *Last Judgment*. In the choir are vivid 13th-century stained-glass windows presented by the guilds. The crypt holds the marble tomb of the 14th-century Duc de Berry, best known for commissioning the illuminated manuscript the *Très Riches Heures (see pp204–5)*. From the top of the north tower stretch views of the beautifully restored medieval quarter and the marshes beyond. Beside the cathedral is a tithe barn and the remains of the Gallo-Roman ramparts.

Statue of Jacques Coeur

The **Jardin des Prés Fichaux**, set along the river Yèvre, contains pools and an open-air theater. To the north lie the **Marais de Bourges**, where gardeners transport their produce by boat.

⌂ Palais Jacques Coeur
Rue Jacques Coeur. ***Tel*** *02 48 24 79 42.* ○ *daily.* ● *Jan 1, May 1, Nov 1 & 11, Dec 25.* 🎧 ♿

Environs

About 22 miles (35 km) south of Bourges in the Berry region is the **Abbaye de Noirlac**. Founded in 1136, it is one of the best-preserved Cistercian abbeys in France.

Statue in the Jardin des Prés Fichaux

CENTRAL FRANCE AND THE ALPS

INTRODUCING CENTRAL FRANCE AND THE ALPS 316–325

BURGUNDY AND FRANCHE-COMTÉ 326–351

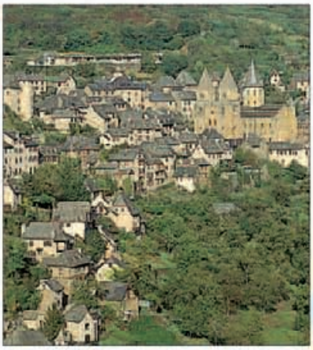
THE MASSIF CENTRAL 352–371

THE RHÔNE VALLEY AND FRENCH ALPS 372–391

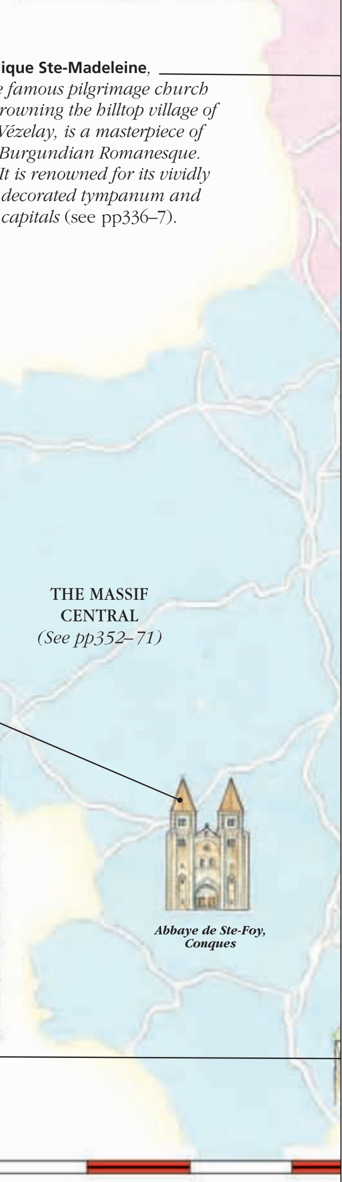
Introducing Central France and the Alps

The geological contrasts of this region reflect its enormous variety, from the industrial and gastronomic metropolis of Lyon to the largely agricultural landscape of Burgundy. The mountains of the Massif Central and the Alps attract visitors for winter sports, superb walking, and other outdoor activities. The major sights of this richly rewarding area, both natural and architectural, are shown here.

Basilique Ste-Madeleine, *the famous pilgrimage church crowning the hilltop village of Vézelay, is a masterpiece of Burgundian Romanesque. It is renowned for its vividly decorated tympanum and capitals* (see pp336–7).

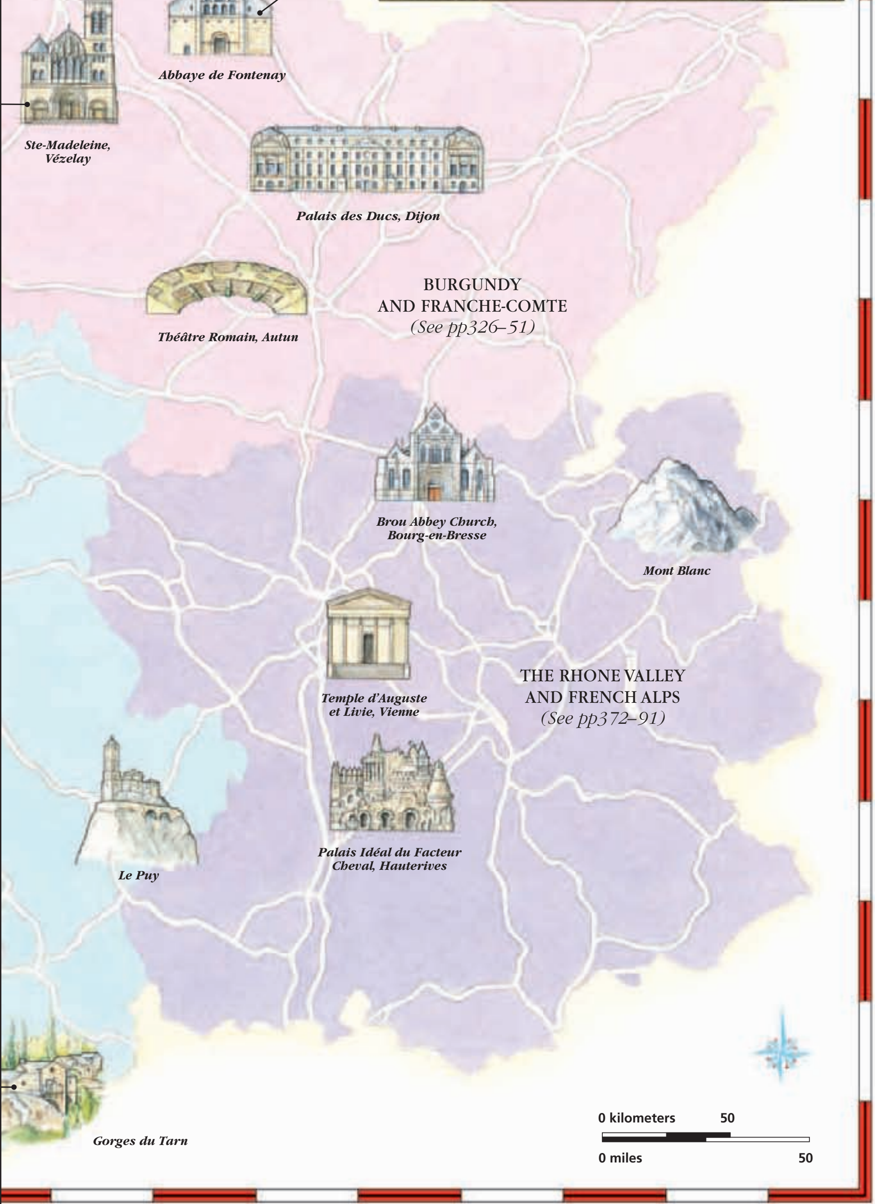


The Abbaye de Ste-Foy *in the village of Conques* (see pp366–7) *is one of the great pilgrimage churches of France, with a fabulous treasury of medieval and Renaissance gold reliquaries.*



The Gorges du Tarn *have some of France's most spectacular natural scenery. The road which follows the plunging course of the river Tarn gives dramatic viewpoints along the canyon and across the limestone Causses* (see pp370–1).

The Abbaye de Fontenay, *founded by Saint Bernard in the early 12th century, is the oldest Cistercian monastery in France* (see pp332–3). *This well-preserved Romanesque abbey is a perfect testimony to the severe ideal of the Cistercian life.*


Abbaye de Fontenay
Ste-Madeleine, Vézelay
Palais des Ducs, Dijon
Théâtre Romain, Autun
BURGUNDY AND FRANCHE-COMTE
(See pp326–51)
Brou Abbey Church, Bourg-en-Bresse
Mont Blanc
Temple d'Auguste et Livie, Vienne
THE RHONE VALLEY AND FRENCH ALPS
(See pp372–91)
Le Puy
Palais Idéal du Facteur Cheval, Hauterives
Gorges du Tarn
0 kilometers 50
0 miles 50

The Flavors of Central France

The renowned gastronomic tradition of Lyon and the rich wine and food of Burgundy combine to make central France a gourmet paradise. The great chefs of the region have a wide choice of excellent local produce: fine Bresse chicken, Charolais beef, and Morvan ham; wildfowl and frogs from the marshes of the Dombe; fish from the Saône and the Rhône; and fat snails called "oysters of Burgundy." Franche-Comté and the Jura contribute smoked sausages, farmhouse cheeses, walnut oil, and fish from glacier-fed lakes. In the Massif Central, sturdy regional fare features salted hams, pork, Cantal cheese, the celebrated green lentils of Le Puy, and wild mushrooms.

Chanterelle mushrooms

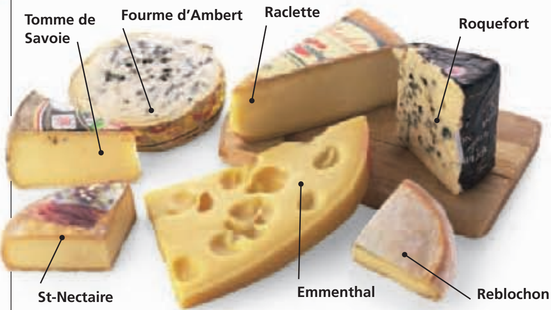
A mountain farmer shows off his fine salt-cured ham

BURGUNDY AND FRANCHE-COMTE

Burgundy is one of France's top wine regions so, not surprisingly, wine plays a major role in the cuisine, such as in the signature dish, *boeuf bourguignon*, made from Charolais beef marinated and then stewed in good red wine, with baby onions, bacon, and mushrooms added. Other specialties include *coq au vin* and *oeufs en meurette*. Dijon's famous mustard appears most classically with steak and in *moutarde au lapin*, rabbit in a creamy mustard sauce. Burgundy and Franche-Comté produce some of the most celebrated French cheeses: Epoisses, a cow's milk cheese washed with *marc de Bourgogne*, Cîteaux, made by monks, and the magnificent Vacherin-Mont d'Or, a winter treat to be scooped straight from its wooden box. Blackcurrants are widely grown and contribute to many desserts as well as the famous Kir: white wine with cassis (blackcurrant liqueur).

THE MASSIF CENTRAL

The peasant cuisine of the Auvergne is well known in France due to the many cafés run by Auvergnats in Paris, where they serve local



Mouthwatering array of classic French cheeses

REGIONAL DISHES AND SPECIALTIES

String of onions

The cuisine of central France is rich with sauces using wine, butter, and cream, which enhance almost every dish: snails in butter and garlic; potatoes cooked with cheese and cream; and beef, lamb, and chicken stewed slowly in reduced wine sauces, often with cream or butter added at the end of cooking. Mushrooms are cooked in cream sauces, and fish is often baked in a creamy gratin. Most indulgent of all is the Alpine fondue, where cheeses are melted, together with Kirsch and wine, in a special earthenware fondue pot. This is placed on a burner on the table, and cubes of bread are speared onto special long forks and dipped into the cheese. Traditionally, anyone who loses their bread in the pot must kiss everyone else at the table.

Oeufs en meurette *This Burgundian dish is eggs poached in red wine with onions, mushrooms, and bacon.*

Traditional charcuterie on sale in a Lyon market

dishes like pork stuffed with cabbage, or *aligot*. Le Puy lentils, grown in the fertile volcanic soils of the Puy-en-Velay basin, combine well with sausages or *petit salé*, or are served cold as a salad. Good beef comes from the Salers cattle of the Auvergne or from the Limousin, where there is also plentiful game. Wild mushrooms are eagerly sought in season. Cheeses include Cantal, one of the country's oldest and similar in flavor to Cheddar, and the famous blue Roquefort, ripened in the limestone caves of the Lozère.

THE RHONE VALLEY AND THE FRENCH ALPS

Lyon is famous for its traditional bistros, *bouchons*, where the cooks are often women, known as *mères*, who dish up substantial fare like onion soup, lyonnais sausages, and *charcuterie*. The markets of Lyon are equally famous, stocked with the region's wide range of fruit, particularly apricots, peaches, and juicy berries.

Redcurrants and blackberries for sale by the punnet

Vegetables include onions, chard, and cardoons, and the most northerly outpost of the olive is at Nyons. The Bresse region is famous for its high-quality chickens.

The Dombes lakes and the Alps are good sources of fish, such as perch, trout, and lake salmon. Bony perch is most delicious eaten as *quenelles de brochet*, filleted fish blended, made into dumplings, and baked in a creamy sauce. From the Alps comes a wide range of cheeses. As well as being delicious to eat fresh, they will often be found melted in *raclettes* or fondues, or layered with sliced potato to make an unctuous *gratin dauphinois*.

ON THE MENU

Chou farci Cabbage stuffed with pork and herbs.

Gigot Brayaude Leg of lamb baked over sliced potatoes and *lardons* of bacon.

Gougère Cheesy *choux* pastry baked in a ring shape.

Jambon persillé Ham and parsley in aspic jelly.

Pochouse Freshwater fish (carp, pike, eel, and trout) stewed in white wine.

Potée savoyarde Stew made with vegetables, chicken, ham, and sausage.

Salade auvergnate Cubes of Auvergne ham, Cantal cheese, and walnuts.

Petit salé *A specialty of the Auvergne region, salt pork is cooked in wine with tiny green Puy lentils.*

Aligot *Slivers of Cantal cheese are beaten into buttery, garlicky mashed potato until the mixture forms long strands.*

Clafoutis *This is usually made with black cherries, baked in batter and laced with Kirsch, a cherry liqueur.*

France's Wine Regions: Burgundy

Grape-picker's basket

Burgundy and its fine wines have inspired awe for centuries. The fame of the region's wines spread throughout Europe in the 14th century, under the Valois Dukes of Burgundy. The system of dividing wine areas into designated *appellations*, of which there are a bewildering number, came into effect in 1935. Even today, the classification system remains dauntingly complex. But despite its impenetrable image, this is unmissable territory for the "serious" wine lover, with its rich vinous history and tradition and dazzling *grands crus*.

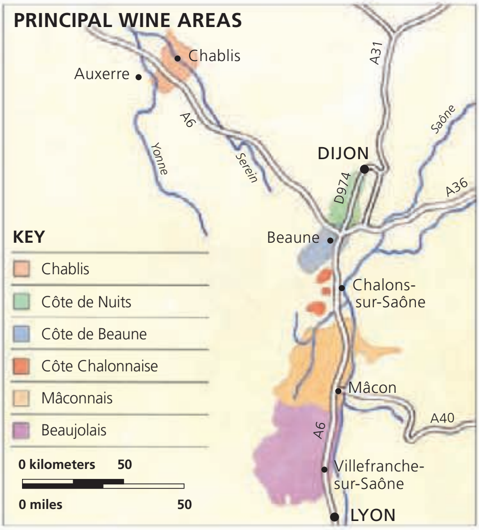
LOCATOR MAP

🟥 *Burgundy wine region*

Clos de Vougeot on the Côte de Nuits

WINE REGIONS

Between Chablis in the north and the Côte Chalonnaise and Mâconnais in the south is the Côte d'Or, incorporating Côte de Nuits and Côte de Beaune. The Beaujolais region *(see pp376–7)* lies below Mâcon.


PRINCIPAL WINE AREAS
Chablis
Auxerre
A31
A6
Yonne
Serein
Saône
DIJON
D974
A36
Beaune
Chalons-sur-Saône
Mâcon
A40
A6
Villefranche-sur-Saône
LYON
KEY
Chablis
Côte de Nuits
Côte de Beaune
Côte Chalonnaise
Mâconnais
Beaujolais
0 kilometers 50
0 miles 50

KEY FACTS ABOUT BURGUNDY

Location and Climate

The continental climate (bleak winters and hot summers) can be very variable, making vintages a crucial quality factor. The best vineyards have chalky soil and face south or east.

Grape Varieties

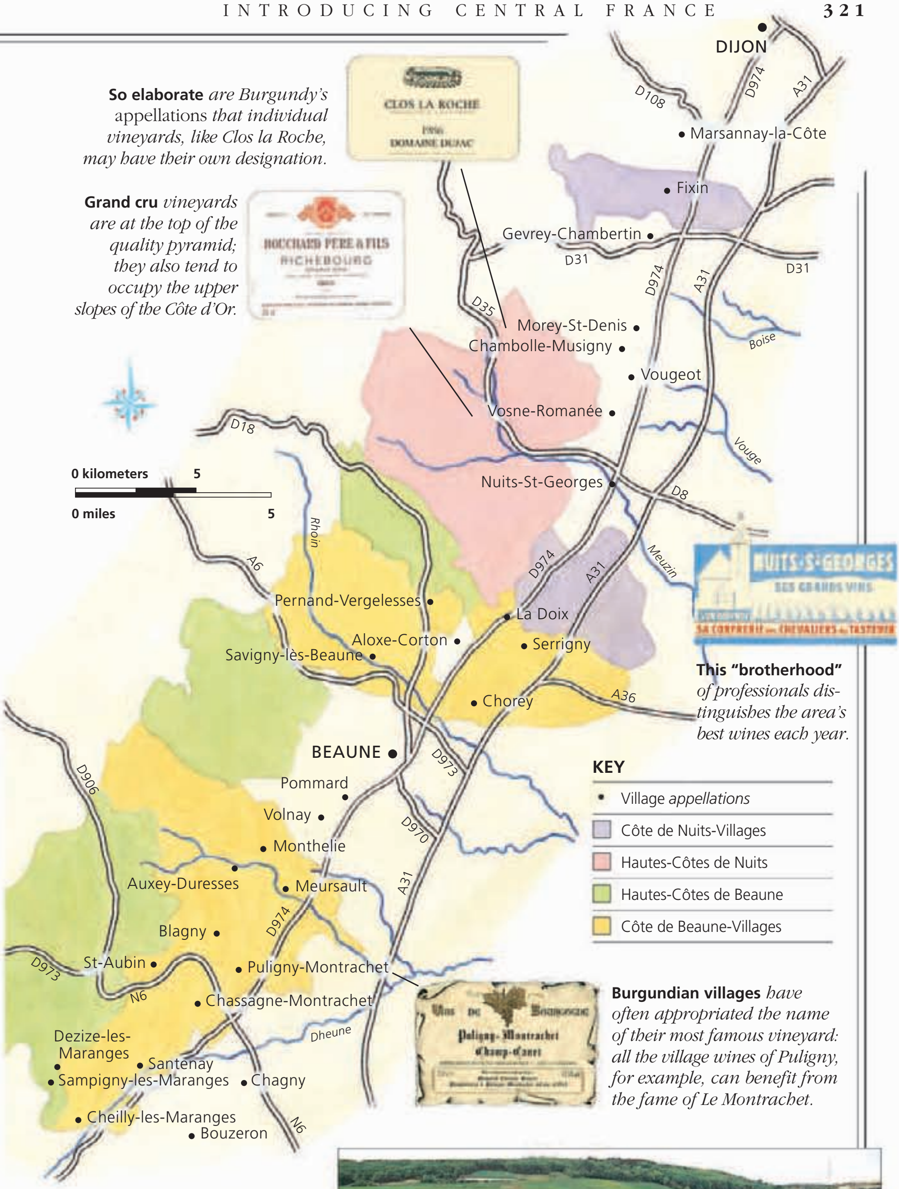
Burgundy is at least relatively simple in its grape varieties. Red Burgundy is made from ***Pinot Noir***, with its sweet flavors of raspberries, cherries, and strawberries, while the ***Gamay*** makes red Mâcon and Beaujolais. ***Chardonnay*** is the principal white variety for Chablis and white Burgundy, though small amounts of ***Aligoté*** and ***Pinot Blanc*** are grown and the ***Sauvignon*** is a specialty of St-Bris.

Good Producers

White Burgundy: Jean-Marie Raveneau, René Dauvissat, La Chablisienne, Comtes Lafon, Guy Roulot, Etienne Sauzet, Pierre Morey, Louis Carillon, Jean-Marc Boillot, André Ramonet, Hubert Lamy, Jean-Marie Guffens-Heynen, Olivier Merlin, Louis Latour, Louis Jadot, Olivier Leflaive.
Red Burgundy: Denis Bachelet, Daniel Rion, Domaine Dujac, Armand Rousseau, Joseph Roty, De Montille, Domaine de la Pousse d'Or, Domaine de l'Arlot, Jean-Jacques Confuron, Robert Chevillon, Georges Roumier, Leroy, Drouhin.

Good Vintages

(Reds) 2005, 2002, 1999, 1996.
(Whites) 2005, 2001, 1996, 1995.


DIJON
D108
D974
A31
Marsannay-la-Côte
Fixin
Gevrey-Chambertin
D31
D31
D974
A31
D35
Morey-St-Denis
Chambolle-Musigny
Boise
Vougeot
Vosne-Romanée
D18
Vouge
Nuits-St-Georges
D8
0 kilometers 5
0 miles 5
Rhoin
A6
D974
A31
Meuzin
Pernand-Vergelesses
La Doix
Aloxe-Corton
Serrigny
Savigny-lès-Beaune
Chorey
A36
BEAUNE
D973
D906
Pommard
Volnay
D970
Monthelie
Auxey-Duresses
Meursault
A31
Blagny
D974
St-Aubin
D973
Puligny-Montrachet
N6
Chassagne-Montrachet
Dheune
Dezize-les-Maranges
Santenay
Sampigny-les-Maranges
Chagny
Cheilly-les-Maranges
Bouzeron
N6
CLOS LA ROCHE
1986
DOMAINE DUJAC
BOUCHARD PÈRE & FILS
RICHEBOURG
NUITS-S-GEORGES
SES GRANDS VINS
SA CONFRERIE des CHEVALIERS du TASTEVIN
Vins de Bourgogne
Puligny-Montrachet
Champ-Canet
KEY
● Village *appellations*
▨ Côte de Nuits-Villages
▨ Hautes-Côtes de Nuits
▨ Hautes-Côtes de Beaune
▨ Côte de Beaune-Villages

So elaborate *are Burgundy's* appellations *that individual vineyards, like Clos la Roche, may have their own designation.*

Grand cru *vineyards are at the top of the quality pyramid; they also tend to occupy the upper slopes of the Côte d'Or.*

This "brotherhood" *of professionals distinguishes the area's best wines each year.*

Burgundian villages *have often appropriated the name of their most famous vineyard: all the village wines of Puligny, for example, can benefit from the fame of Le Montrachet.*

THE CÔTE D'OR

The Côte de Nuits and Côte de Beaune, together forming the "golden" Côte d'Or *(see p344)*, meet at the historic town of Beaune, which hosts the most famous annual wine auction in the world *(see p346)*. *"Hautes-Côtes"* and *"Villages"* wines, from a different *terroir*, are less sought after than wines from the starry individual *appellations*.

Teams of grape-pickers at the vineyards of Nuits-St-Georges

The French Alps

In any season, the Alps are one of the most spectacular regions of France – a majestic mountain range stretching south from Lake Geneva almost to the Mediterranean, and climaxing in Europe's loftiest peak, the 15,770-ft (4,800-m) Mont Blanc. The area encompasses the old regions of Dauphiné and Savoie, once remote and independent (Savoie only became part of France in 1860). They have prospered since alpine holidays and skiing became popular over the last century, but are still very conscious of their distinct identity.

Children in traditional Savoie costumes

The Alpine landscape in winter: chalets and skiers on the slopes at Courchevel

WINTER

The ski season usually starts just before Christmas, and finishes at the end of April. Most resorts offer both cross-country and downhill skiing, with many pistes linking two or more ski stations. The less energetic can still enjoy the landscape from some of the highest cable cars *(téléphériques)* in the world.

Of the 100 or more French Alpine resorts, the most popular include **Chamonix-Mont Blanc**, the historic capital of Alpine skiing and site of the first Winter Olympics in 1924; **Megève**, which boasts one of the best ski schools in Europe; **Morzine**, a year-round resort on the Swiss border, overlooked by the modern, car-free resort of **Avoriaz**; modern **Albertville**, site of the 1992 Winter Olympics; **Les Trois Vallées**, which include glamorous **Courchevel** and **Méribel**, and the lesser-known **Val Thorens/Les Ménuires**; **Tignes**, a year-round resort; **Les Arcs** and **La Plagne**, both purpose-built; and **Val d'Isère**, a favorite among the rich and famous.

A cable car at Courchevel, part of Les Trois Vallées complex

A downhill skier at Val d'Isère

ALPINE FLOWERS

In spring and early summer the pastures of the French Alps are ablaze with flowers. These include blue and yellow gentians, bellflowers, lilies, saxifrages and a variety of orchids. Steep mountain meadows cannot be farmed intensively, and the absence of fertilizers and weed killers enables wild flowers to flourish.

Spring gentian *(Gentiana verna)*

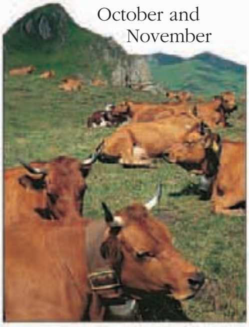
Martagon lily *(Lilium martagon)*

The French Alps in spring: flower-filled meadows overlooked by brilliant white peaks

SPRING AND SUMMER

The Alpine summer season starts in late June, extending to early September – most resorts close in October and November between the hiking and skiing seasons. After the spring thaw, flower-filled pastures, snow-fed mountain lakes, and a huge number of marked trails make this area a hiker's paradise. In the Chamonix area alone there are over 195 miles (310 km) of hiking trails. The best known long-distance route is the **Tour du Mont Blanc**, a 10-day hike via France, Italy, and Switzerland. The **GR5** traverses the entire Alps, passing through the **Parc National de la Vanoise** and **Parc Régional du Queyras** *(see p387)* to the south. *Téléphériques* give access to the higher trails, where the views are even more awesome. Be sure to bring plenty of warm, waterproof clothing: the weather can change very quickly.

Many resorts are now concentrating on broadening their summer appeal – golf, tennis, mountain biking, horseback-riding, paragliding, canoeing, white water rafting, glacier skiing, and mountain climbing are all widely available.



Bell-ringing dairy cows in an Alpine pasture

Mountain climbers scaling the heights around Mont Blanc

Geology of the Massif Central

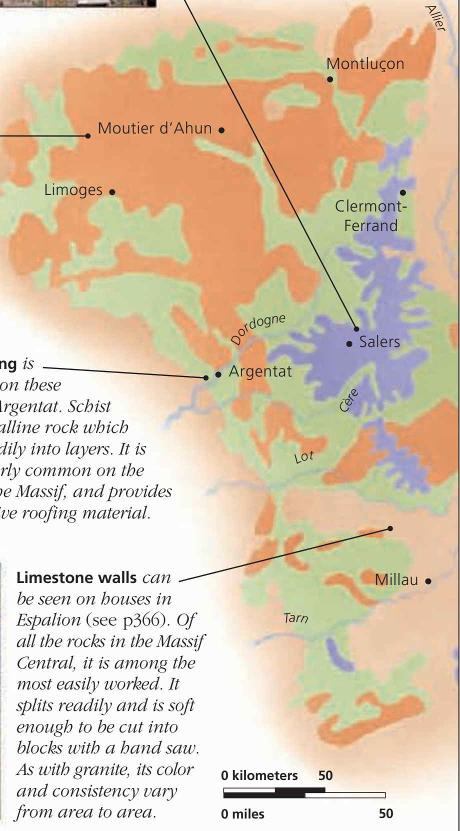
The Massif Central covers almost one-fifth of France and is over 250 million years old. Most of its peaks have been eroded to form a vast plateau split into deep valleys. The heart of the Massif consists of hard, igneous rocks like granite, with softer rocks such as limestone at its margins. Different rock types are reflected in the landscape and buildings; in the eroded Gorges du Tarn, the houses are built of russet-colored limestone. Massive granite farmhouses are a feature of Limousin, and Le Puy-en-Velay is distinguished by its giant basalt pillars.

LOCATOR MAP

■ *Extent of the Massif Central*

This granite portal *is found in the Romanesque church at Moutier d'Ahun* (see p356). *Granite underlies much of the Massif Central.*

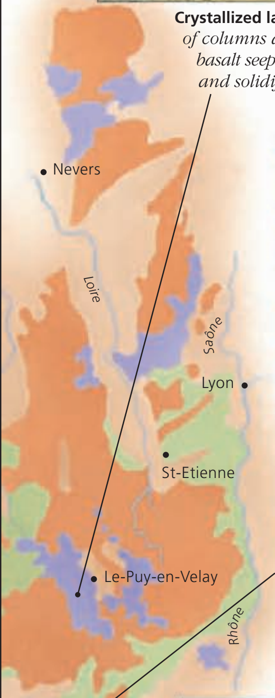
Basalt *is a dark, fine-grained rock formed by volcanic lava. A common building stone in the Auvergne, it is often cut into blocks and bonded with lighter-colored mortar. In the medieval town of Salers* (see p363), *basalt was used for most of the buildings, including this one in the Grande Place.*



Schist tiling *is featured on these roofs at Argentat. Schist is a crystalline rock which splits readily into layers. It is particularly common on the edge of the Massif, and provides an effective roofing material.*

Limestone walls *can be seen on houses in Espalion* (see p366). *Of all the rocks in the Massif Central, it is among the most easily worked. It splits readily and is soft enough to be cut into blocks with a hand saw. As with granite, its color and consistency vary from area to area.*

Crystallized lava, *like this dramatic curtain of columns at Prades, formed when liquid basalt seeped through the surrounding rock and solidified to form giant crystals.*



KEY

- 🟧 Sedimentary rock
- 🟪 Surface volcanic rock
- 🟧 Granite
- 🟩 Metamorphic rock

Limestone plateaux (causses) *are typical of this region. Gorges, where rivers have cut through layers of this slightly soluble rock, run deep into the Massif Central.*

This mature landscape *at Mont Aigoual is the highest point in the Cévennes* (see p367), *dividing rivers flowing into the Atlantic and the Mediterranean. Its granite and schist rocks show erosion.*

RECOGNIZING ROCKS

Geologists divide rocks into three groups. Igneous rocks, like granite, are formed by volcanic activity and either extruded on to the surface or intrude into other rocks below ground. Sedimentary rocks are produced by sediment build-up. Metamorphic rocks have been transformed by heat or pressure.

SEDIMENTARY ROCK

Oolitic limestone *often contains fossils and small amounts of quartz.*

SURFACE VOLCANIC ROCK

Basalt, *which can form very thick sheets, is the most common lava rock.*

GRANITE

Pink granite, *a coarse-grained rock, is formed deep in the earth's crust.*

METAMORPHIC ROCK

Muscovite schist *is a medium-grained mud or clay-based rock.*

BURGUNDY AND FRANCHE-COMTÉ

YONNE · NIÈVRE · CÔTE D'OR · SAÔNE-ET-LOIRE
HAUTE-SAÔNE · DOUBS · JURA

Burgundy considers itself the heart of France, a prosperous region with world-renowned wine, earthy but excellent cuisine, and magnificent architecture. Franche-Comté to the east combines gentle farmland with lofty Alpine forests.

Under the dukes of Valois, Burgundy was France's most powerful rival, with territory extending well beyond its present boundaries. By the 16th century, however, the duchy was ruled by governors appointed by the French king, but it still managed to keep its privileges and traditions. Once a part of Burgundy, Franche-Comté – the Free County – struggled to remain independent of the French crown, and was a province of the Holy Roman Empire until annexed by Louis XIV in 1674.

Burgundy, now as in the past, is a wealthy region, a center of medieval religious faith which produced Romanesque masterpieces at Vézelay, Fontenay, and Cluny. Dijon is a splendid city, filled with the great palaces of the old Burgundian nobility and a collection of great paintings and sculptures in the Musée des Beaux Arts. The vineyards of the Côte d'Or, the Côte de Beaune, and Chablis yield some of the world's most venerated wines. Other richly varied landscapes – from the wild forests of the Morvan to the lush farmland of the Brionnais – produce snails, Bresse chickens, and Charolais beef.

Franche-Comté has none of this opulence, though its capital, Besançon, is an elegant 17th-century city with a tradition of clockmaking. Topographically the Franche-Comté is divided into two, with gently rolling farmland in the Saône valley and high Alpine scenery to the east. This forest country of Alpine torrents filled with trout is also the home of great cheeses, notably Vacherin and Comté, and of the characteristic yellow wine of Arbois.

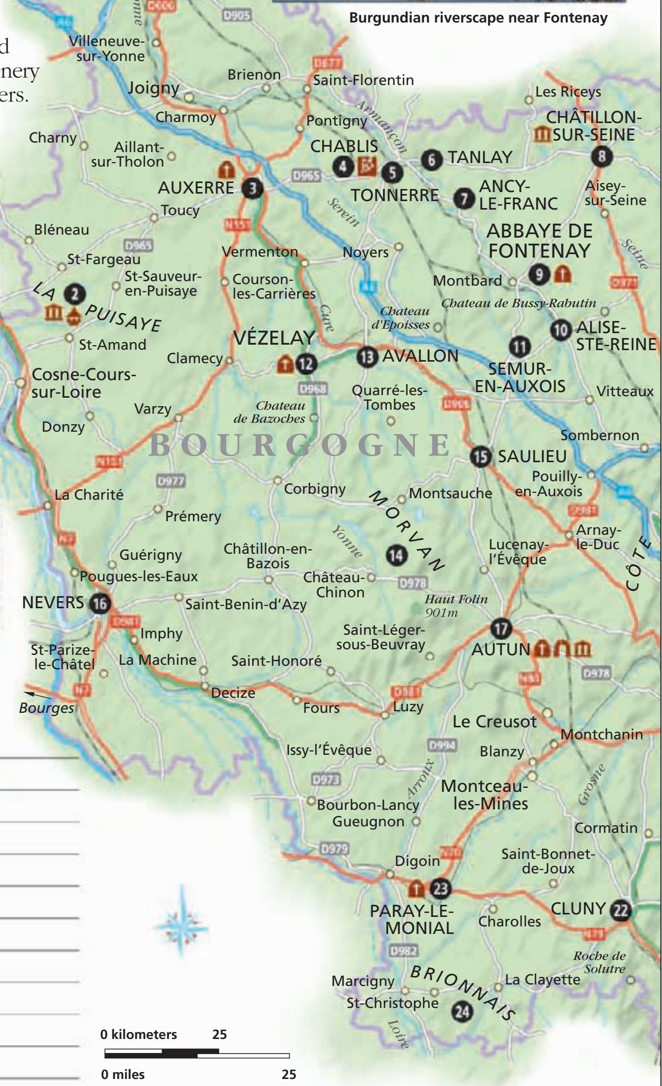
The prehistoric site of the Roche de Solutré near Mâcon

◁ **Vineyards at Santenay in the world-renowned Côte de Beaune district**

Exploring Burgundy and Franche-Comté

Burgundy is arguably France's richest province – historically, culturally, gastronomically, and economically. This lush kernel of a once great power possesses a concentration of unique Romanesque architecture in Fontenay and Vézelay, along with some of the world's most venerated wines. Dijon is a must for lovers of art, architecture, and food. Franche-Comté is better suited for active vacations, such as trekking and canoeing in wild scenery and crystal clear rivers.

Burgundian riverscape near Fontenay


Champigny
SENS 1
Paris
Villeneuve-l'Archevêque
Yonne
A5
D905
Villeneuve-sur-Yonne
Brienon
Saint-Florentin
Joigny
Charmoy
Pontigny
Armançon
Les Riceys
CHÂTILLON-SUR-SEINE
Charny
Aillant-sur-Tholon
CHABLIS 4
5
6 TANLAY
8
AUXERRE 3
D965
TONNERRE
7 ANCY-LE-FRANC
Aisey-sur-Seine
Toucy
Serein
Bléneau
ABBAYE DE FONTENAY
St-Fargeau
Vermenton
Noyers
Seine
Montbard
9
St-Sauveur-en-Puisaye
Courson-les-Carrières
LA PUISAYE 2
Chateau d'Epoisses
Chateau de Bussy-Rabutin
Cure
10 ALISE-STE-REINE
11
St-Amand
VÉZELAY
Clamecy
12
13 AVALLON
SEMUR-EN-AUXOIS
Cosne-Cours-sur-Loire
Quarré-les-Tombes
Vitteaux
Varzy
Chateau de Bazoches
Donzy
Sombernon
BOURGOGNE
15 SAULIEU
Pouilly-en-Auxois
La Charité
Corbigny
Montsauche
MORVAN
Prémery
Arnay-le-Duc
Guérigny
Châtillon-en-Bazois
Lucenay-l'Évêque
14
CÔTE
Pougues-les-Eaux
Château-Chinon
NEVERS 16
Saint-Benin-d'Azy
Haut Folin 901m
Imphy
Saint-Léger-sous-Beuvray
17
AUTUN
St-Parize-le-Châtel
La Machine
Saint-Honoré
Bourges
Decize
Fours
Luzy
Le Creusot
Montchanin
Issy-l'Évêque
Blanzy
Arroux
Montceau-les-Mines
Grosne
Bourbon-Lancy
Gueugnon
Cormatin
Digoin
Saint-Bonnet-de-Joux
23
PARAY-LE-MONIAL
Charolles
CLUNY 22
Roche de Solutre
Marcigny
BRIONNAIS
La Clayette
St-Christophe
24
Loire
0 kilometers 25
0 miles 25

Distinctive Burgundian glazed roof tiles, Hôtel Aubriot in Dijon

KEY

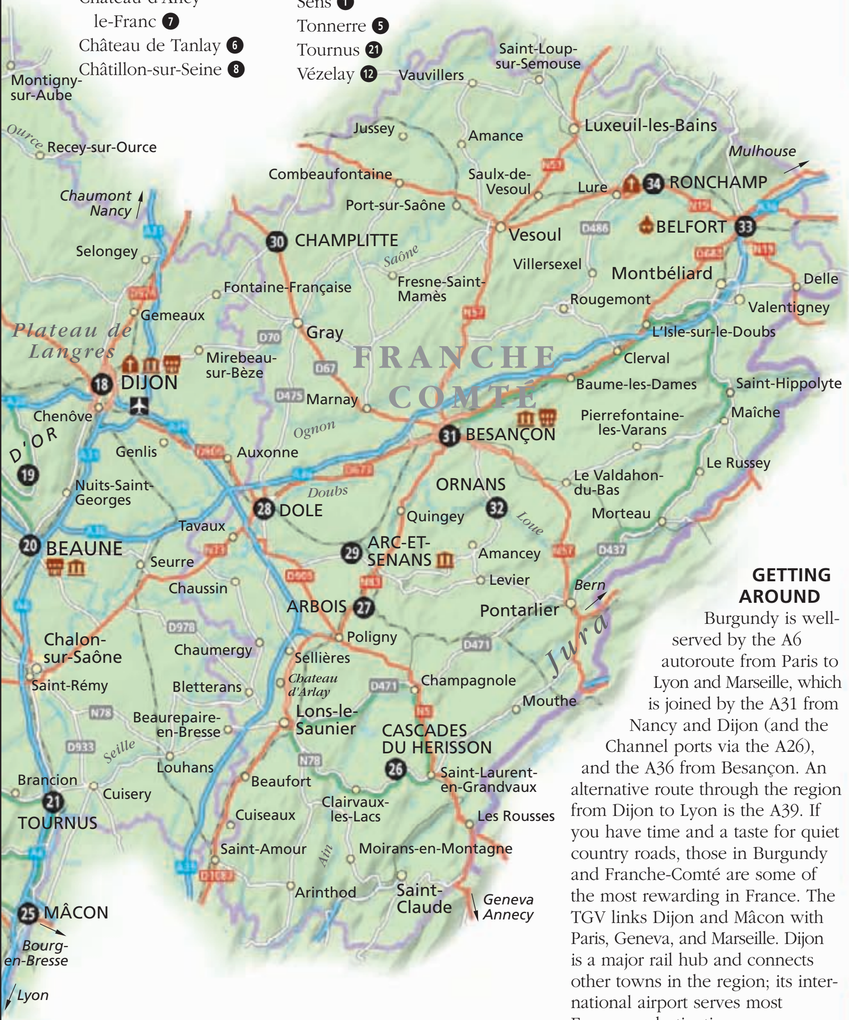
- Highway
- Major road
- Secondary road
- Minor road
- Scenic route
- Main railroad
- Minor railroad
- International border
- Regional border
- ▲ Summit

For additional map symbols *see back flap*

SIGHTS AT A GLANCE

Abbaye de Fontenay ⑨
Alise-Ste-Reine ⑩
Arbois ㉗
Arc-et-Senans ㉙
Autun ⑰
Auxerre ③
Avallon ⑬
Beaune ⑳
Belfort ㉝
Besançon ㉛
Brionnais ㉔
Cascades du Hérisson ㉖
Chablis ④
Champlitte ㉚
Château d'Ancy-le-Franc ⑦
Château de Tanlay ⑥
Châtillon-sur-Seine ⑧
Cluny ㉒
Côte d'Or ⑲
Dijon ⑱
Dole ㉘
La Puisaye-Forterre ②
Mâcon ㉕
Morvan ⑭
Nevers ⑯
Ornans ㉜
Paray-le-Monial ㉓
Ronchamp ㉞
Saulieu ⑮
Semur-en-Auxois ⑪
Sens ①
Tonnerre ⑤
Tournus ㉑
Vézelay ⑫

Wine harvest in Nuits-St-Georges, Côte d'Or


Montigny-sur-Aube
Ource
Recey-sur-Ource
Chaumont
Nancy
Selongey
Plateau de Langres
Gemeaux
18 DIJON
Chenôve
D'OR
19
Genlis
Nuits-Saint-Georges
20 BEAUNE
Chalon-sur-Saône
Saint-Rémy
Brancion
21 TOURNUS
25 MÂCON
Bourg-en-Bresse
Lyon
Vauvillers
Saint-Loup-sur-Semouse
Jussey
Amance
Luxeuil-les-Bains
Mulhouse
Combeaufontaine
Saulx-de-Vesoul
Lure
34 RONCHAMP
Port-sur-Saône
30 CHAMPLITTE
Saône
Vesoul
BELFORT 33
Fontaine-Française
Fresne-Saint-Mamès
Villersexel
Montbéliard
Delle
Rougemont
Valentigney
Mirebeau-sur-Bèze
Gray
L'Isle-sur-le-Doubs
FRANCHE-COMTÉ
Clerval
Marnay
Baume-les-Dames
Saint-Hippolyte
Maîche
Auxonne
Ognon
31 BESANÇON
Pierrefontaine-les-Varans
Le Russey
Doubs
28 DOLE
ORNANS
32
Le Valdahon-du-Bas
Tavaux
Quingey
Loue
Morteau
Seurre
29 ARC-ET-SENANS
Amancey
Chaussin
Levier
Bern
ARBOIS 27
Pontarlier
Jura
Poligny
Chaumergy
Sellières
Champagnole
Bletterans
Château d'Arlay
Mouthe
Beaurepaire-en-Bresse
Lons-le-Saunier
CASCADES DU HÉRISSON
Seille
26
Louhans
Saint-Laurent-en-Grandvaux
Cuisery
Beaufort
Clairvaux-les-Lacs
Cuiseaux
Les Rousses
Saint-Amour
Ain
Moirans-en-Montagne
Arinthod
Saint-Claude
Geneva
Annecy

GETTING AROUND

Burgundy is well-served by the A6 autoroute from Paris to Lyon and Marseille, which is joined by the A31 from Nancy and Dijon (and the Channel ports via the A26), and the A36 from Besançon. An alternative route through the region from Dijon to Lyon is the A39. If you have time and a taste for quiet country roads, those in Burgundy and Franche-Comté are some of the most rewarding in France. The TGV links Dijon and Mâcon with Paris, Geneva, and Marseille. Dijon is a major rail hub and connects other towns in the region; its international airport serves most European destinations.

La Sainte Châsse, 11th-century reliquary in the Treasury in Sens

Sens ❶

Yonne. 👥 *30,000.* 🚆 🚌
ℹ *pl Jean-Jaurès (03 86 65 19 49).*
🛒 *Mon & Fri.*
www.office-de-tourisme-sens.com

The little town of Sens, at the confluence of the rivers Yonne and Vanne, was important before Caesar came to Gaul. It was the Senones whose attempt to sack the Roman Capitol in 390 BC was thwarted by a flock of geese.

The **Cathédrale St-Etienne** is Sens' outstanding glory. Begun before 1140, it is the oldest of the great Gothic cathedrals and its noble simplicity influenced many other churches. Louis IX *(see p51)* did the town the honor of getting married here in 1234.

The exquisite stained-glass windows from the 12th–16th centuries show biblical scenes, including the Tree of Jesse, and a tribute to Thomas Becket who was exiled here. His liturgical robes are in the Treasury (part of the **Musées de Sens**), which has one of the finest collections in France, including a beautiful Byzantine reliquary.

🏛 Les Musées de Sens
Pl de la Cathédrale. ***Tel*** *03 86 64 46 22.* ○ *Jun–Sep: daily; Oct–May: Wed, Sat, Sun (Mon, Thu, Fri pms only).*
🎫 ♿ 🛍

La Puisaye-Forterre ❷

Yonne, Nièvre. 🚆 *Auxerre, Clamecy, Bonny-sur-Loire, Cosne-Cours-sur-Loire.* 🚌 *St-Fargeau, St-Sauveur-en-Puisaye.* ℹ *Charny (03 86 63 65 51).*

The strange, secret forest country of La Puisaye-Forterre was immortalized by Colette (1873–1954), who was born at **St-Sauveur** in "a house that smiled only on its garden side…." This 17th-century château now houses the **Musée Colette**.

The best way to explore the region is on foot or by bike around its watery woodlands, orchards, and meadows. Alternatively, take a ride on the *Transpoyaudin*, a 17-mile (27-km) train ride from St-Sauveur to Villiers St-Benoît.

A hands-on visit can be made to **Château de Guédelon**, a 25-year project recreating a medieval castle, using only original building methods and materials found locally. Nearby is the genuine 13th-century **Château de Ratilly**, with pottery, art exhibitions, concerts, and music workshops. More of this can be seen in **St-Amand**, the center of Puisaye stoneware production, much of which was traditionally fired in the 18th-century horizontal kiln at Moutiers. Both the pottery and local frescoes (see the churches at **Moutiers** and **La Ferté-Loupière**) made use of locally mined ocher, a major export in the 19th century. The pink brick **Château de St-Fargeau** housed the exiled Grande Mademoiselle *(p57)*.

Château de St-Fargeau in the Puisaye-Forterre region

Colette in the 1880s at St-Sauveur

🏛 Musée Colette
Château St-Sauveur-en-Puisaye.
Tel *03 86 45 61 95.* ○ *Apr–Oct: Wed–Mon; Dec–Mar: weekends & school hols pms.* 🎫

Auxerre ❸

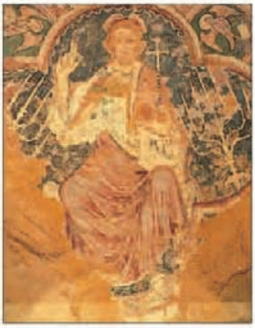
Yonne. 👥 *40,000.* 🚆 ℹ *1–2 quai de la République (03 86 52 06 19).* 🛒 *Tue & Fri.* **www**.ot-auxerre.fr

Beautifully sited overlooking the Yonne river, Auxerre justly prides itself on a fine collection of churches along with a charming pedestrianized main square, the place Charles-Surugue.

The Gothic **Cathédrale St-Etienne** took more than three centuries to build and was completed around 1560. It is famous for its intricate 13th-century stained glass. The choir with its slender columns and colonettes is the epitome of Gothic elegance, while the western portals are decorated with beautiful flamboyant sculpture which, unfortunately, has been mutilated by war and weather. The Romanesque crypt is adorned by unique 11th–13th-century frescoes, including one depicting Christ on a white horse. The badly pillaged treasury has an interesting collection of illuminated manuscripts.

St. Germanus, mentor of St. Patrick and bishop of Auxerre in the 5th century, was buried at the former abbey church of **St-Germain**. The abbey was founded by Queen Clothilde, wife of Clovis *(see pp48–9)*, the first Christian king of France, and hence is an important shrine. The crypt is partly Carolingian, with tombs and 11th–13th century frescoes. The former abbey houses the **Musée St-Germain** with local Gallo-Roman finds.

🏛 Musée St-Germain
2 pl St-Germain. ***Tel*** *03 86 18 05 50*
○ *Wed–Mon.* ● *some public hols.*



Medieval fresco in Cathédrale St-Etienne at Auxerre

Chablis ❹

Yonne. 👥 *2,700.* 🚌 ℹ *1 rue du Maréchal de Lattre de Tassigny (03 86 42 80 80).* *Sun.* **www**.chablis.net

There can be no question that Chablis tastes best in Chablis. Although this is one of the most famous wine villages on earth, its narrow stone streets still have an air of sleepy prosperity. February processions in nearby Fyé, attended by the wine brotherhood of Piliers Chablisiens, honor St-Vincent, patron saint of wine-growers.

The intriguing spring of Fosse Dionne in Tonnerre

Tonnerre ❺

Yonne. 👥 *6,200.* 🚆 🚌 ℹ *pl Marguerite de Bourgogne (03 86 55 14 48).* *Sat & Wed.* **www**.tonnerre.fr

The mystical cloudy-green spring of **Fosse Dionne** is a good reason to visit the small town of Tonnerre. An astonishing volume of water bursts up from the ground into an 18th-century washing place. Due to its depth and strong currents it has never been thoroughly explored, and local legend has it that a serpent lives on undisturbed.

The **Hôtel-Dieu** is 150 years older than the Hôtel-Dieu in Beaune *(see p346–7)*. It was founded by Margaret of Burgundy in 1293 to care for the poor. In the Revolution it lost its tiling, but the barrel-vaulted oak ceiling survived.

Hôtel-Dieu & Musée
Rue du Prieuré. ***Tel*** *03 86 55 14 48*
○ *Apr–Oct: daily; Nov–Mar: Mon–Sat.* ♿

Château de Tanlay ❻

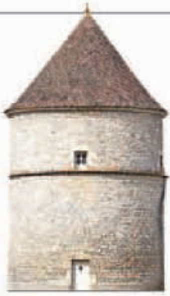
Tanlay. ***Tel*** *03 86 75 70 61.* ○ *Apr–Oct: Wed–Mon.* *oblig.*

The moated Château de Tanlay is a beautiful example of French Renaissance, built in the mid-16th century. There is a *trompe l'oeil* in the Grande Galerie and, in the corner tower, an intriguing School of Fontainebleau painted ceiling. Its antique divinities represent famous Protestants and Catholics in the 16th century, such as Diane de Poitiers as Venus.

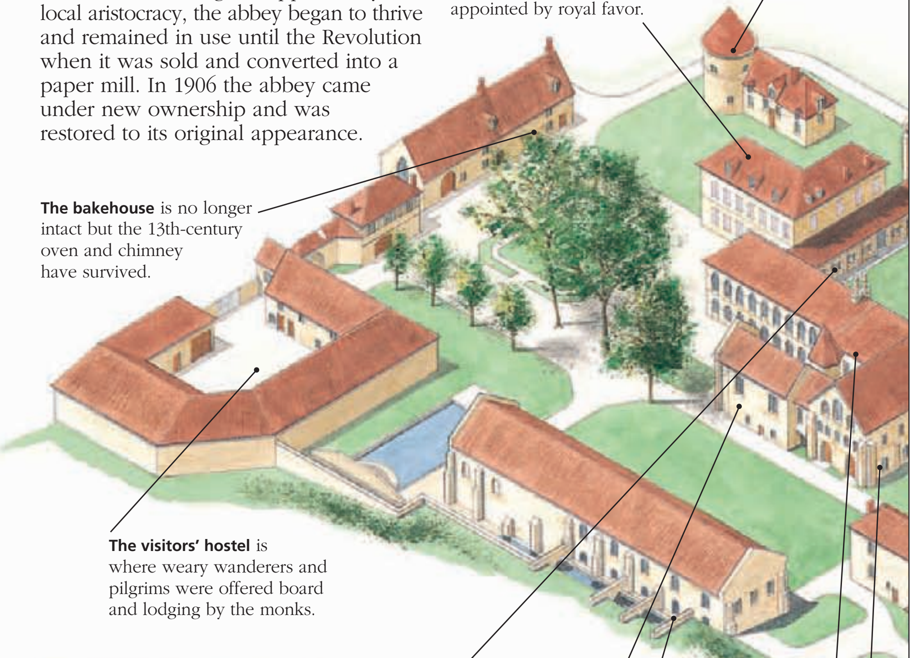
The Renaissance façade and *cour d'honneur* of Château de Tanlay

Abbaye de Fontenay ❾

The tranquil Abbey of Fontenay is the oldest surviving Cistercian foundation in France and offers a rare insight into the Cistercian way of life. It represents the spirit of the order in the sublime gravity of its Romanesque church and its plain but elegant chapterhouse, in early Gothic style. The abbey was founded in 1118 by St-Bernard. Situated deep in the forest, it offered the peace and seclusion the Cistercians sought. Supported by the local aristocracy, the abbey began to thrive and remained in use until the Revolution when it was sold and converted into a paper mill. In 1906 the abbey came under new ownership and was restored to its original appearance.



Dovecote
A magnificent circular dovecote, built in the 13th century, is situated next to the kennel where the precious hunting dogs of the dukes of Burgundy were guarded by servants.



The 17th-century abbot's lodgings were built when the abbots were appointed by royal favor.

The bakehouse is no longer intact but the 13th-century oven and chimney have survived.

The visitors' hostel is where weary wanderers and pilgrims were offered board and lodging by the monks.

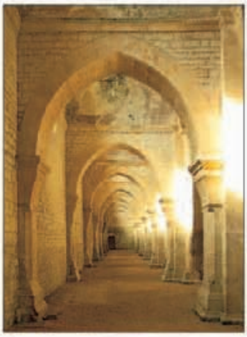
★ Cloisters
For a 12th-century monk a walk through the cloisters was an opportunity for meditation and provided shelter from the weather.

Warming Room

In the forge monks produced their own tools and hardware.

Fontenay "Prison"
It may be that this 15th-century building was actually used to lock up not local miscreants but important abbey archives, in order to protect them from damage by rats.

Scriptorium
Manuscripts were copied here. The adjacent Warming Room was used to warm chilled hands.



★ Abbey Church
Rich decoration has no place in this church from the 1140s. But the severe architectural forms, the warm color of the stone, and the diffused light convey a grandeur of their own.

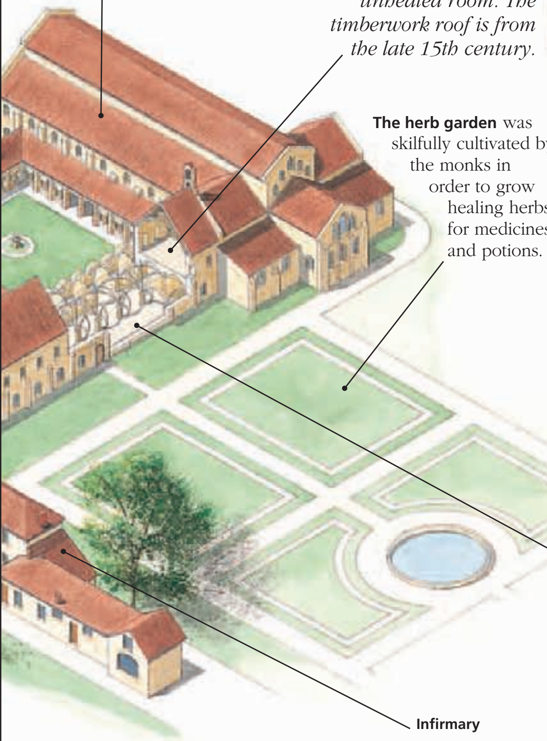
VISITORS' CHECKLIST

Marmagne. ***Tel*** *03 80 92 15 00.* 🚉 *Montbard.* ◯ *10am–6pm daily (to 7pm Jul–Aug; Nov–Mar: 10am–noon, 2–5pm).* ☑ ♿ ☑ 📷 **www**.abbayedefontenay.com

Dormitory
Monks slept in long rows on straw mattresses in this large, unheated room. The timberwork roof is from the late 15th century.

STAR FEATURES

- ★ Abbey Church
- ★ Cloisters



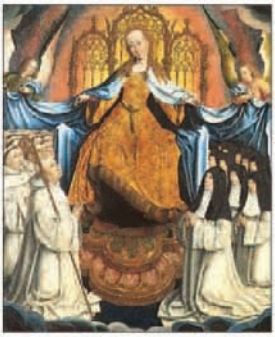
The herb garden was skilfully cultivated by the monks in order to grow healing herbs for medicines and potions.

Infirmary

Chapterhouse
Once a day, monks and abbot assembled in this room to discuss matters concerning the community. It derives much of its charm from the elegant 12th-century piers and the rib-vaults.

ST-BERNARD AND THE CISTERCIANS

In 1112 Bernard, a young Burgundian nobleman, joined the Cistercians. At the time the order was still obscure, founded 14 years earlier by a group of monks who wanted to turn their back on the elaborate lifestyle of Cluny *(see pp48–9)*, renounce the world, and espouse poverty and simplicity of life. During Bernard's lifetime the Cistercians became one of the largest and most famous orders of its time. Part of this success was clearly due to Bernard's powerful personality and his skills as a writer, theologian, and statesman. He reinforced the poverty rule, rejecting all forms of embellishment. In 1174, only 21 years after his death, he was canonized.



***The Virgin Protecting the Cistercian Order*, by Jean Bellegambe**

Château d'Ancy-le-Franc ❼

Ancy-le-Franc. **Tel** *03 86 75 14 63.* ○ *mid-Mar–mid-Nov: Tue–Sun.* ♿ ☞ *obligatory.* **www**.chateau-ancy.com

The classical Renaissance façade of Château d'Ancy-le-Franc gives an austere impression. Its inner courtyard, however, has rich ornamentation. The château was built in the 1540s by the Italian Sebastiano Serlio for the Duke of Clermont-Tonnerre. Most of the interior decoration was carried out by Primaticcio and other members of the Fontainebleau School *(see pp180–81)*. Diane de Poitiers, the duke's sister-in-law and mistress of Henry II, is portrayed in the *Chambre de Judith et Holophernes*.

The château holds monthly classical music concerts and cooking workshops.

The vase of Vix in the Musée du Châtillonnais, Châtillon-sur-Seine

Châtillon-sur-Seine ❽

Côte d'Or. 👥 *5,837.* 🚆 🚌 ℹ *rue du Bourg (03 80 91 13 19).* ⛺ *Sat.*

World War II left Châtillon a smoking ruin, hence the town's resolutely modern aspect. But the past is still present in the **Musée du Châtillonnais**, where the magnificent Vix treasure is displayed. In 1953, the tomb of a Gaulish princess, dating from the 6th century BC, was discovered near Vix at Mont Lassois. The trove of jewelry and artifacts of Greek origin includes a stunning bronze vase, 66 in (164 cm) high and weighing 459 lb (208 kg).

The staid façade of Château d'Ancy-le-Franc

Another point of interest is the Romanesque **Eglise St-Vorles** containing an *Entombment* with Christ and mourners splendidly sculpted (1527).

At the nearby source of the river Douix, which runs into the Seine, is a beautiful grotto.

🏛 Musée du Châtillonnais
Rue de la Libération. **Tel** *03 80 91 24 67.* ○ *Wed–Mon (Jul–Aug: daily).* ● *Jan 1, May 1, Dec 25.* ♿ ☞

Abbaye de Fontenay ❾

See pp332–3.

Alise-Ste-Reine ❿

Côte d'Or. 👥 *3,275.* ℹ *pl Bingerbruck (03 80 96 89 13).* **www**.alesia-tourisme.net

Mont Auxois, above the village of Alise-Ste-Reine, was the site of Caesar's final victory over the heroic Gaulish chieftain Vercingétorix in 52 BC after a six-week siege *(see p46)*. The first excavations here were undertaken in the mid-19th century, and they uncovered the vestiges of a thriving Gallo-Roman town, with theater, forum, and well-laid-out street plan. The **Musée Alésia** houses artifacts, jewelry, and bronze figures from the site.

Alise is dominated by Aimé Millet's gigantic moustachioed statue of Vercingétorix, which was placed here in 1865 to commemorate the first excavations. Cynics feel that it bears a more than passing resemblance to Napoleon III, who sponsored the dig.

🏛 Musée Alésia
Rue de l'Hôpital. **Tel** *03 80 96 10 95.* ● *for renovation until 2010.* ♿

Environs

In the vicinity lies **Château de Bussy-Rabutin**. The spiteful 17th-century soldier and wit Roger de Bussy-Rabutin created its highly individualistic

Excavations at the Roman site near Alise-Ste-Reine

decor while exiled from Louis XIV's court. One room is dedicated to portraits of his many mistresses, as well as a couple of imaginary ones.

⛫ Château de Bussy-Rabutin
Bussy-le-Grand. ***Tel** 03 80 96 00 03.*
○ *Tue–Sun.* ● *Jan 1, Nov 1 & 11, Dec 25.* 📷

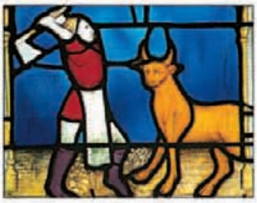
Semur-en-Auxois ⑪

Côte d'Or. 👥 *5,000.* 🚌 ℹ *2 place Gaveau (03 80 97 05 96).* ⛺ *Sun.* **www**.ville-semur-en-auxois.fr

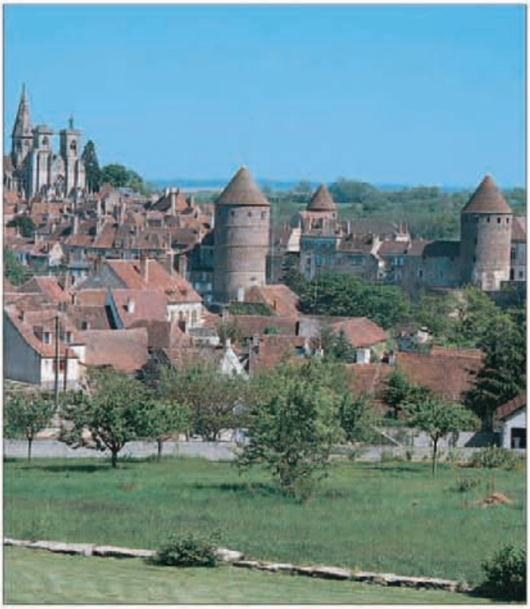
Approached from the west, Semur-en-Auxois comes as a surprise on an otherwise uneventful road. Its massive round bastions built in the 14th century (one of them with an unnerving gash in it) suddenly appear, towering over the Pont Joly and the peaceful river Armançon.

The **Eglise Notre-Dame** dates from the 13th and 14th centuries, and was modeled on the cathedral of Auxerre. The fragile high walls had to be restored in the 15th and 19th centuries. The church houses significant artworks, from the tympanum showing the legend of Doubting Thomas on the north doorway, to the 15th-century *Entombment* by Antoine le Moiturier. The stained glass presents the legend of Saint Barbara, and the work of different guilds such as butchers and drapers.

Environs
The village of Epoisses is the site of the moated **Château d'Epoisses**, its 11th–18th-century construction blending medieval towers with fine Renaissance details, and a huge 15th-century dovecote. Epoisses is also the home of one of Burgundy's most revered cheeses, to be sampled at the local café or *fromagerie*.



Stained-glass window in Eglise Notre-Dame at Semur-en-Auxois



Semur-en-Auxois by the river Armançon

⛫ Château d'Epoisses
Epoisses. ***Tel** 03 80 96 40 56.*
○ *Jul–Aug: Wed–Mon (grounds: all year).* 📷 ✋ ♿ *ground floor only.*

Vézelay ⑫

See pp336–7.

Avallon ⑬

Yonne. 👥 *9,000.* 🚆 🚌
ℹ *6 rue Bocquillot (03 86 34 14 19).*
⛺ *Sat & Thu.*
www.avallonnais-tourisme.com

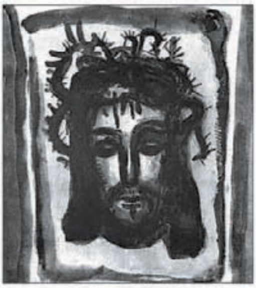
A fine old fortified town, Avallon is situated on a granite spur between two ravines by the river Cousin.

Avallon suffered in the wars of Saracens, Normans, English, and French, which accounts for its defensive aspect. The town is quiet and rather beautiful, full of charming details. The main monument is the 12th-century Romanesque **Eglise St-Lazare**, with two carved doorways. The larger illustrates the signs of the zodiac, the labors of the month, and the musicians of the Apocalypse. The nave is decorated with sophisticated acanthus capitals and polychrome statuary.

The **Musée de l'Avallonnais** features an intricate Venus mosaic from the 2nd century AD, and Georges Rouault's (1871–1958) series of Expressionist etchings, the *Miserere*.

🏛 Musée de l'Avallonnais
5 rue du College. ***Tel** 03 86 34 03 19.*
○ *May–Oct: Wed–Mon pms; Nov–Apr: Sat–Sun pms.* 📷 🛍

Environs
To the southwest of Avallon is the 12th-century Château de Bazoches, given to Maréchal de Vauban by Louis XIV in 1675, and transformed by him into a military garrison.



Miserere **by Georges Rouault in the Musée d'Avallonnais, Avallon**

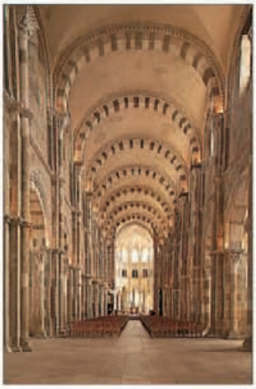
Vézelay ⑫

Decorated capital

The golden glow of the Basilique Ste-Madeleine crowning Vézelay's hill is visible from afar. Tourists follow in the footsteps of medieval pilgrims, ascending the narrow street up to the former abbey church. In the 12th century, at the height of its glory, the abbey claimed to house relics of Mary Magdalene and was also an important meeting point for pilgrims en route to Santiago de Compostela in Spain *(see pp400–1)*. Today its attraction lies in the Romanesque church with its magnificent sculpture and Gothic choir.

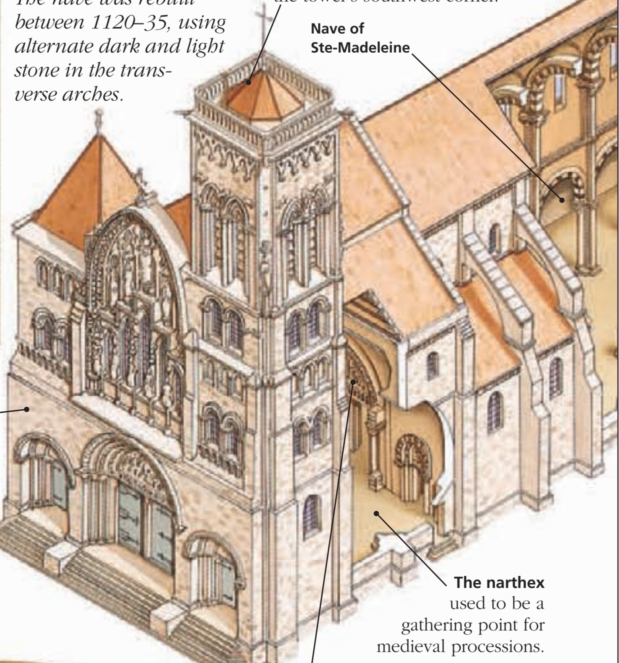
View of Vézelay

The abbey dominates Vézelay's surroundings as it once dominated the religious and worldly affairs of the area.



Nave of Ste-Madeleine

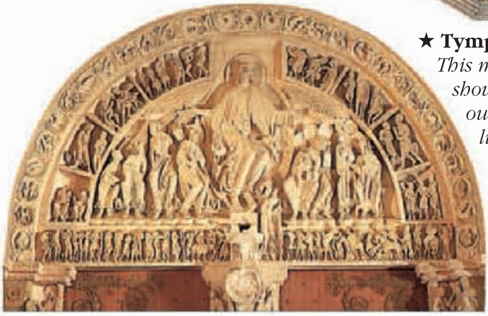
The nave was rebuilt between 1120–35, using alternate dark and light stone in the transverse arches.



Tour St-Michel was built in 1150–1250. It derives its name from the statue of the archangel in the tower's southwest corner.

The façade dates from 1150 and has a large 13th-century window. It was about to collapse when Viollet-le-Duc was commissioned to restore it according to old plans in 1840.

The narthex used to be a gathering point for medieval processions.



★ Tympanum

This masterpiece of sculpture (1120–35) shows Christ on His throne, stretching out His hands from which rays of light descend on to the apostles.

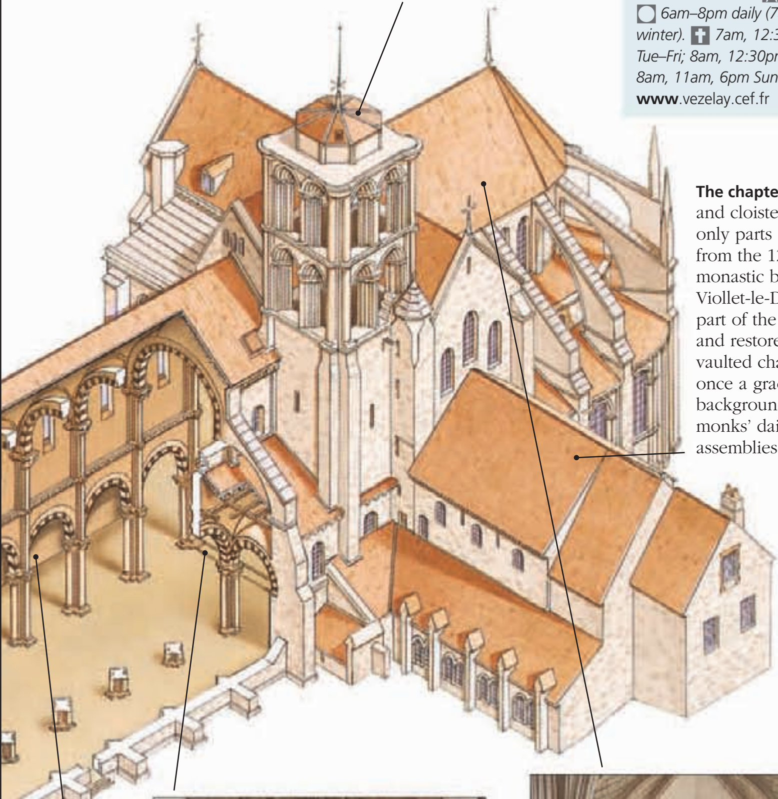
STAR FEATURES

- ★ Tympanum
- ★ Capitals

Tour St-Antoine was built at the same time as the choir, in the late 12th century. Its counterpart on the north side was never finished.

VISITORS' CHECKLIST

Basilique Ste-Madeleine, Vézelay. ***Tel*** *03 86 33 39 50.* 🚆 *Sermizelles.* ○ *6am–8pm daily (7am–dusk winter).* ✝ *7am, 12:30pm, 6pm Tue–Fri; 8am, 12:30pm, 6pm Sat; 8am, 11am, 6pm Sun.* 📷 **www**.vezelay.cef.fr



The chapterhouse and cloister are the only parts remaining from the 12th-century monastic buildings. Viollet-le-Duc rebuilt part of the cloister and restored the rib-vaulted chapterhouse, once a graceful background for the monks' daily assemblies.

Crypt of Ste-Madeleine
The Romanesque crypt houses relics once thought to be Mary Magdalene's. The vault was rebuilt in 1165.

★ Capitals
The capitals in the nave and narthex are exquisitely carved and give a vivid rendering of the stories of Classical antiquity and the Bible. The master who created them remains unknown.

Choir of Ste-Madeleine
The choir was rebuilt in the last quarter of the 12th century in the then modern Gothic style of the Ile de France.

Morvan, a region of rivers and forests well-suited to fishing and other outdoor pursuits

Morvan ⑭

Yonne, Côte d'Or, Nièvre, Saône et Loire. ✈ *Dijon.* 🚆 *Autun, Mombard.* 🚌 *Château-Chinon, Saulieu, Avallon.* ℹ *2 pl St Christophe, Château-Chinon (03 86 85 06 58); Maison du Parc, St-Brisson (03 86 78 79 57).* **www**.morvan-tourisme.org

Morvan is a Celtic word meaning Black Mountain, which is a good description of this area seen from afar. The immense, sparsely inhabited plateau of granite and woodland appears suddenly in the center of the rich Burgundy hills and farmland. Stretching roughly north to south, it gains altitude as it proceeds southward, reaching a culminating point of 2,928 ft (901 m) at **Haut-Folin**.

The Morvan's two sources of natural wealth are abundant water and dense forests of oak, beech, and conifer. In the old days lumber used to be floated out of the area to Paris via a network of lakes and rivers. Today it travels by truck, and the Yonne, Cousin, and Cure rivers are instead used for recreation and the production of electricity.

The Morvan has always been a poor, remote area. Each of its largest towns, Château-Chinon in the center and Saulieu on the outskirts, has barely 3,000 inhabitants.

During World War II the Morvan was a bastion of the French Resistance. Today a Regional Nature Park, its attraction is its wildness. Information on a wide variety of outdoor activities, including bicycling, canoeing, skiing, and horse trekking, is available at the **Maison du Parc** at St-Brisson where there is also the very moving **Musée de la Resistance**. There are plenty of short walking trails, and two well-signed long-distance paths: the GR13 (Vézelay to Autun) and the Tour du Morvan par les Grands Lacs.

🏛 Musée de la Résistance
Maison du Parc, St-Brisson. ***Tel*** *03 86 78 79 06.* ○ *Easter–mid-Nov: Wed–Mon (Jul & Aug: daily).* 🎧 ♿

Saulieu ⑮

Côte d'Or. 👥 *3,000.* 🚆 🚌 ℹ *24 rue d'Argentine (03 80 64 00 21).* *Thu & Sat.* **www**.saulieu.fr

On the edge of the Morvan, Saulieu has been a shrine of Burgundian cooking ever since the 17th century. The town was then a staging post on the Paris to Lyon coach road. Today the tradition is maintained by the famous chef Bernard Loiseau at the **Côte d'Or** restaurant *(see p598)*. Yet there is more to Saulieu than *ris de veau de lait braisé or poularde truffée à la vapeur*. The Romanesque **Basilique St-Andoche**, built in the early 12th century, has decorated capitals with representations of the Flight into Egypt and a comical version of the story of Balaam and his donkey waylaid by the Angel.

Nevers faïence vase

Nevers ⑯

Nièvre. 👥 *41,000.* 🚆 🚌 ℹ *Palais Ducal, rue Sabatier. (03 86 68 46 00).* *Sat.* **www**.nevers-tourisme.com

Like all Burgundian towns fronting the Loire, Nevers should be approached from the west side of the river for a full appreciation of its noble site. Though lacking historical importance, the town has much to show. Considered to be the earliest of the Loire châteaux, the **Palais Ducal** has a long Renaissance façade framed by polygonal towers and a broad esplanade. The Romanesque 11th-century **Eglise St-Etienne** has graceful monolithic columns and a wreath of radiating chapels.

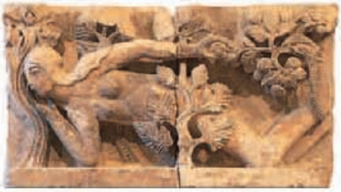
In the crypt of the Gothic **Cathédrale St-Cyr** is a 16th-century sculpted *Entombment*, and the foundations of a 6th-century baptistry, discovered in 1944, after heavy bombing.

The contemporary stained-glass windows are also noteworthy. The overlordship of Nevers passed to the Gonzaga family in the 16th century. They brought with them an Italian school of artists skilled in faïence making and glass-blowing.

The industry has remained and the modern pottery is still traditionally decorated in blue, white, yellow, and green, with its curious trademark, the little green arabesque knot, or *noeud vert*. The best place to view it is at the **Musée Municipal** and the best place to buy it is the 17th-century **Faïencerie Montagnon**.

🏛 Musée Municipal Frédéric Blandin
16 rue Saint-Geneste. ***Tel*** *03 86 68 44 60.* ● *for renovation (part of the museum will be open by 2010).*

Environs
Just south of Nevers, the 19th-century **Pont du Guetin** carries the Loire Canal majestically across the Allier river. The church at **St-Parize-le-Châtel** has a jolly Burgundian menagerie sculpted on the capitals of the crypt.



The *Temptation of Eve* in Autun

Autun ⑰

Saône-et-Loire. 👥 *18,000.* 🚆 🚌 ℹ *13 rue Général Demetz (03 85 86 80 38).* ⛺ *Wed & Fri.*
www.autun-tourisme.com

The imposing Porte St-André in Autun, once part of the Roman wall

Augustodunum, the town of Augustus, was founded in the late 1st century BC. It was a great center of learning, with a population four times what it is today. Its theater, built in the 1st century AD, could seat 20,000 people.

Today Autun is still a delight, deserving gastronomic as well as cultural investigation. The magical **Cathédrale St-Lazare** was built in the 12th century. It is special because of its sculptures, most of them by the mysterious 12th-century artist Gislebertus. He sculpted both the capitals inside and the glorious Last Judgment tympanum over the main portal. This masterpiece, called a "Romanesque Cézanne" by André Malraux, escaped notice and was saved from destruction during the Revolution because it had been plastered over in the 18th century. Inside, some of the capitals can be seen close-up in a room in the tower. Look also for the sculpture of Pierre Jeannin and his wife. Jeannin was the president of the Dijon parliament who prevented the Massacre of St. Bartholomew *(see pp54–5)* spreading with the perceptive remark, "the commands of very angry monarchs should be obeyed very slowly."

The brilliant collection of medieval art at the **Musée Rolin** includes the low relief *Temptation of Eve,* by Gislebertus. There is also the 15th-century painted stone Virgin of Autun, and the *Nativity of Cardinal Rolin* by the Master of Moulins, from about 1480.

The monumental **Porte St-André** and **Porte d'Arroux**, and the ruins of the **Théâtre Romain** and the **Temple de Janus**, are reminders of Autun's glorious Roman past.

🏛 Musée Rolin
3 rue des Bancs. ***Tel*** *03 85 52 09 76.* ○ *Wed–Mon.* ● *public hols.* ♿ ✋

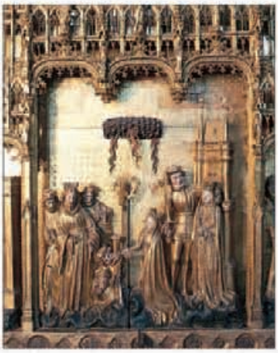
Remains of the Roman theatre at Autun, dating from the 1st century AD

Street by Street: Dijon ⓲

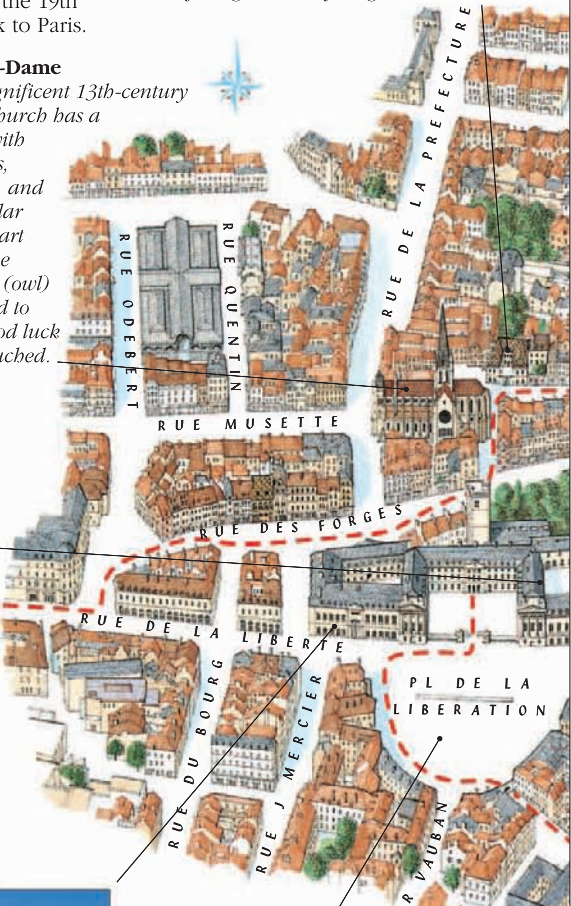
The center of Dijon is noted for its architectural splendor – a legacy from the Dukes of Burgundy *(see p343)*. Wealthy parliament members also had elegant *hôtels particuliers* built in the 17th–18th centuries. The capital of Burgundy, Dijon today has a rich cultural life and a renowned university. The city's great art treasures are housed in the Palais des Ducs. Dijon is also famous for its mustard *(see p318)* and *pain d'épice* (gingerbread), a reminder of the town's position on the spice route. It became a major rail hub during the 19th century and now has a TGV link to Paris.

Hôtel de Vogüé
This elegant 17th-century mansion is decorated with Burgundian cabbages and fruit garlands by Hugues Sambin.

★ Notre-Dame
This magnificent 13th-century Gothic church has a façade with gargoyles, columns, and the popular Jacquemart clock. The chouette *(owl) is reputed to bring good luck when touched.*



Musée des Beaux Arts
The collection of Flemish masters here includes this 14th-century triptych by Jacques de Baerze and Melchior Broederlam.



Place de la Libération was created by Mansart in the 17th century.

★ Palais des Ducs
The dukes of Burgundy held court here, but the building seen today was mainly built in the 17th century for the parliament. It now houses the Musée des Beaux Arts.

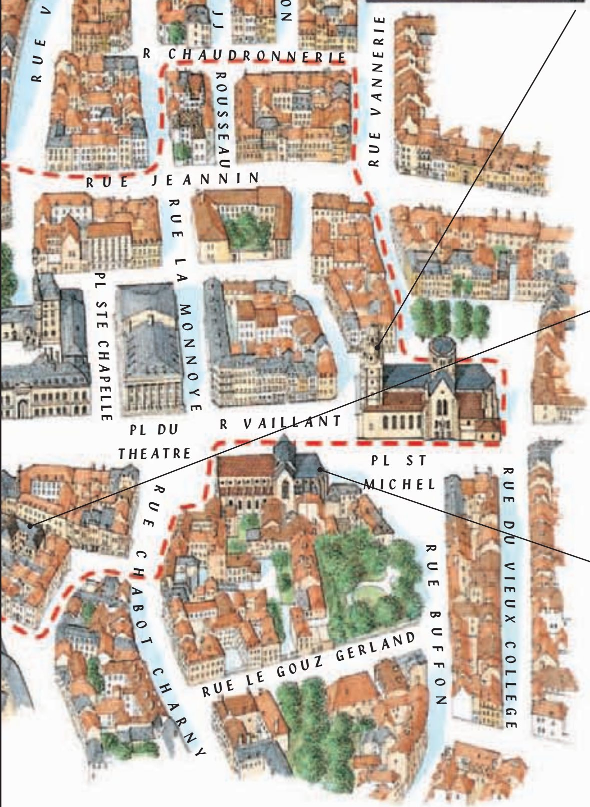
Rue Verrerie
This cobbled street in the old merchants' quarter is lined with medieval half-timbered houses. Some have fine wood carvings, such as Nos. 8, 10, and 12.

VISITORS' CHECKLIST

Côte d'Or. 👥 *153,000.* ✈ *3 miles (5 km) SSE Dijon.* 🚉 🚌 *cours de la Gare* ℹ *Pavillon, place Darcy & 11 rue des Forges (08 92 70 05 58).* 🛒 *Tue, Fri, Sat.* 🎉 *Florissimo (2010 next); Festival de Musique (Jun); Fêtes de la Vigne (Sep).* **Hôtel de Vogüé** *only inner courtyard open.* **Musée Magnin** *(03 80 67 11 10)* ○ *Tue–Sun.* ● *Jan 1, Dec 25.* 🖱 **www**.dijon-tourism.com

★ St-Michel
Begun in the 15th century and completed in the 17th century, St-Michel's façade combines Flamboyant Gothic with Renaissance details. On the richly carved porch, angels and biblical motifs mingle with mythological themes.

Musée Magnin
A collection of French and foreign 16th–19th-century paintings are displayed among period furniture in this 17th-century mansion.


RUE VERRERIE
RUE PROUDHON
RUE JJ
R CHAUDRONNERIE
ROUSSEAU
RUE VANNERIE
RUE JEANNIN
RUE LA MONNOYE
PL STE CHAPELLE
PL DU THEATRE
R VAILLANT
PL ST MICHEL
RUE CHABOT CHARNY
RUE LE GOUZ GERLAND
RUE BUFFON
RUE DU VIEUX COLLEGE

Eglise St-Etienne dates back to the 11th century but has been rebuilt many times. Its characteristic lantern was added in 1686.

STAR SIGHTS

- ★ Palais des Ducs
- ★ Notre-Dame
- ★ St-Michel

KEY

▬ ▬ Suggested route

0 meters 100

0 yards 100

***Well of Moses* by Claus Sluter, in the Chartreuse de Champmol**

Exploring Dijon

The center of Dijon is a warren of little streets that reward exploration. The rue des Forges, behind the Palais de Ducs, was the main street until the 18th century and is named after the jewelers and goldsmiths who had workshops there. The tourist office, housed in Hôtel Chambellan at No. 34, is Flamboyant Gothic with a stone spiral staircase and wooden galleries. At No. 38 the Maison Maillard, built in 1560, has a stone façade decorated by Hugues Sambin.

Rue Chaudronnerie has a number of houses of note, especially the Maison des Cariatides at No. 28, with ten fine stone carved caryatids framing the windows. Place Darcy is lined with hotels and restaurants; the Jardin Darcy is delightful.

🏛 Musée des Beaux Arts

Palais des Etats de Bourgogne, Cour de Bar. ***Tel** 03 80 74 52 70.* ○ *Wed–Mon.* ● *Jan 1, May 1 & 8, Jul 14, Nov 1 & 11, Dec 25.* ♿ *limited.* ☞

Dijon's prestigious art collection is housed in the former Palais des Ducs *(see p340)*. The Salle des Gardes on the first floor is dominated by the giant mausoleums of the dukes, with tombs sculpted by Claus Sluter (c.1345–1405). Other exhibits include two gilded Flemish retables and a portrait of Philip the Good by Rogier van der Weyden.

The art collection has Dutch and Flemish masters and sculpture by Sluter and Rude. There are also Swiss and German primitives, 16th–18th century French paintings, and the Donation Granville of 19th- and 20th-century French art. Also note the ducal kitchens with six fireplaces, and the Tour Philippe le Bon, 150 ft (46 m) tall with a fine view of Burgundian tiled roof tops.

✝ Cathédrale St-Bénigne

Pl Ste-Bénigne. ***Tel** 03 80 30 39 33.* ○ *daily.* ☞ ♿

Little remains of the 11th-century Benedictine abbey first founded in honor of St-Bénigne. Beneath the church is a Romanesque crypt with a fine rotunda ringed by three circles of columns.

🏛 Musée Archéologique

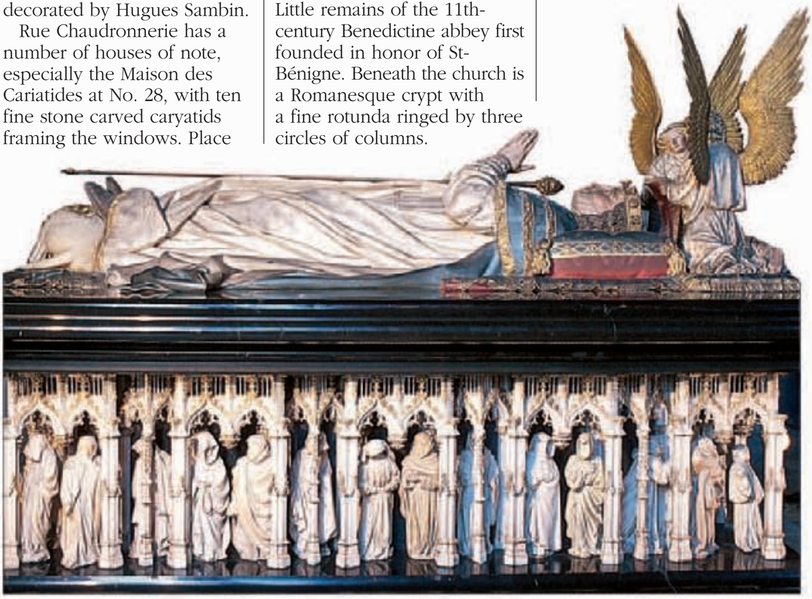
5 rue du Docteur Maret. ***Tel** 03 80 30 88 54.* ○ *Wed–Mon.* ● *most public hols.*

The museum is housed in the old dormitory of the Benedictine abbey of St-Bénigne. The 11th-century chapterhouse, its stocky columns supporting a barrel-vaulted roof, houses a fine collection of Gallo-Roman sculpture. The ground floor, with its lovely fan vaulting, houses the famous head of Christ by Claus Sluter, originally from the *Well of Moses*.

🏛 Chartreuse de Champmol

1 bd Chanoine Kir. ○ *by appt (0892 70 05 58).*

This was originally the site of a family necropolis built by Philip the Bold, destroyed during the Revolution. All that remains is a chapel doorway and the famous *Well of Moses* by Claus Sluter. It is now in the grounds of a psychiatric hospital east of Dijon train station, not very easy to find but definitely worth the effort. Despite its name, it is not a well but a monument, its lower part probably originally surrounded by water. Sluter is renowned for his deeply cut carving and here his work, depicting six prophets, is exquisitely lifelike.

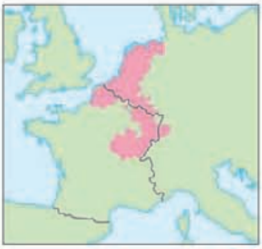


The tomb of Philip the Bold by Claus Sluter, now in the Salle des Gardes of the Musée des Beaux Arts

The Golden Age of Burgundy

While the French Capetian dynasty fought in the Hundred Years' War *(see pp52–3)*, the dukes of Burgundy built up one of the most powerful states in Europe, which included Flanders and parts of Holland. From the time of Philip the Bold (1342–1404), the ducal court became a cultural force, supporting many of Europe's finest artists, such as painters Rogier Van der Weyden and the Van Eyck brothers and sculptor Claus Sluter. The duchy's dominions were, however, broken up after the death of Duke Charles the Bold in 1477.

The tomb of Philip the Bold *in Dijon was made by the Flemish sculptor Claus Sluter, who was among the most brilliant artists of the Burgundian golden age. The dramatic realism of the mourners is one of the most striking features of this spectacular tomb, begun while the duke was still alive.*

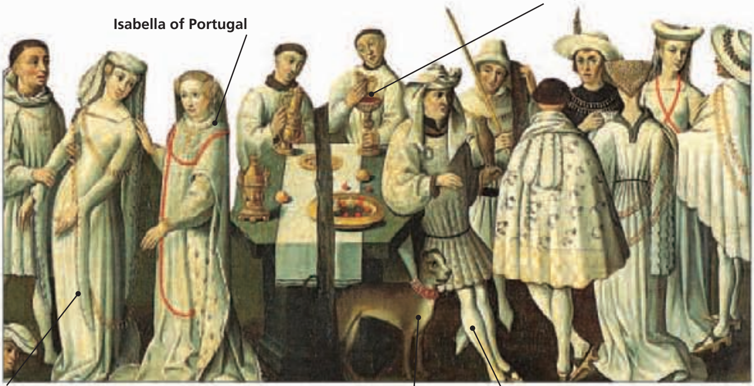


BURGUNDY IN 1477

🟥 *Extent of the duchy at its peak*

THE MARRIAGE OF PHILIP THE GOOD

Philip the Good, duke from 1419–67, married Isabella of Portugal in 1430. This 17th-century copy of a painting by Van Eyck shows the sumptuous wedding feast, when Philip also inaugurated the chivalric Order of the Golden Fleece.



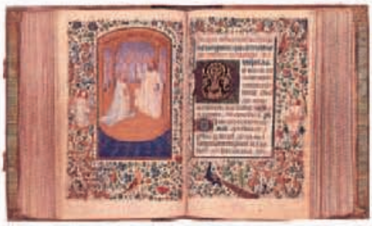
The dukes surrounded themselves with luxury, including fine gold and silverware.

Isabella of Portugal

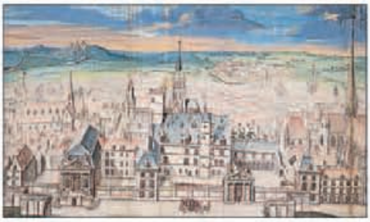
The Duchess of Bedford, Philip's sister

Greyhounds were popular hunting animals at the Burgundian court.

Philip the Good is dressed in white ceremonial finery.



Burgundian art, *such as this Franco-Flemish Book of Hours, reflected the Flemish origins of many of the dukes' favorite artists.*



Dijon's Palais des Ducs *was rebuilt in 1450 by Philip the Good to reflect the glory of the Burgundian court, a center of art, chivalry, and glorious feasts. Empty after Charles the Bold's death, it was reconstructed in the 17th century.*

Wine harvest in the vineyards of Nuits-St-Georges, part of the Côte d'Or district

Côte d'Or ⑲

Côte d'Or. ✈ *Dijon.* 🚆 🚌 *Dijon, Nuits-St-Georges, Beaune, Santenay.* ℹ *Dijon (08 92 70 05 58).* **www**.cotedor-tourisme.com

In winemaking terms, the Côte d'Or includes the Côte de Beaune and the Côte de Nuits in a nearly unbroken line of vines from Dijon to Santenay. Squeezed in between the flat plain of the Saône to the southeast and a plateau of woodland to the northwest, this narrow escarpment is about 30 miles (50 km) long. The grapes of the great Burgundy vineyards grow in the golden reddish soil of the slope (hence the area's name).

The classification of the characteristics of the land is fabulously technical and elaborate, but for the layman a rough rule of thumb might be that 95 percent of the best vines are on the uphill side of the N74 thoroughfare *(see pp320–21)*. The names on the signposts haunt the dreams of wine lovers the world over: Gevrey-Chambertin, Vougeot, Chambolle-Musigny, Vosne-Romanée, Nuits-St-Georges, Aloxe-Corton, Meursault, and Chassagne Montrachet.

A narrow street in the historic center of Beaune

Typical grape basket in the Musée du Vin de Bourgogne at Beaune

Beaune ⑳

Côte d'Or. 👥 *23,000.* 🚆 🚌 ℹ *6 bd Perpeuil (03 80 26 21 30).* ⊖ *Sat, Wed.* 🎭 *Baroque Music (Jul).*

The old center of Beaune, snug within its ramparts and encircling boulevards, is easy to explore on foot. Its indisputable treasure is the **Hôtel-Dieu** *(see pp346–7)*. The Hôtel des Ducs de Bourgogne, built in the 14th–16th centuries, houses the **Musée du Vin de Bourgogne**. The building, with its flamboyant façade, is as interesting as its display of traditional winemaking equipment.

Farther to the north lies the **Collégiale Notre-Dame**, begun in the early 12th century. Inside this mainly Romanesque church hang five very fine 15th-century woollen and silk tapestries. With hints of early Renaissance style, they delicately illustrate the life of the Virgin Mary in 19 scenes.

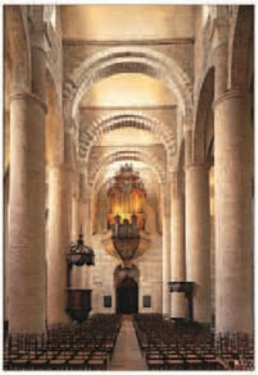
🏛 Musée du Vin de Bourgogne
Rue d'Enfer. ***Tel*** *03 80 22 08 19.*
○ *Apr–Nov: daily; Dec–Mar: Wed–Mon.* ♿

Tournus ㉑

Saône-et-Loire. 👥 *6,500.* 🚆 🚌 ℹ *pl de l'Abbaye (03 85 27 00 20).* ⊖ *Sat.* **www**.tournugeois.fr

The Abbaye de St-Philibert is one of Burgundy's oldest and greatest Romanesque buildings. It was founded by a group of monks from Noirmoutier who had been driven from their island by invading Normans in the 9th century, who brought with them relics of their patron saint, Philibert (still in the choir). Rebuilt in the 10th–12th centuries, the well-fortified abbey church is

Dovecote in Cormatin château gardens, Mâconnais



Nave of St-Philibert in Tournus

made from lovely pale pink stone, with black and white vaulting inside.

The 17th-century Hôtel-Dieu has its original rooms intact with the furniture, equipment, and pharmacy on display. It also houses the **Musée Greuze** dedicated to Tournus' most famous son, the artist Jean-Baptiste Greuze (1725–1805).

Environs

Southwest of Tournus lies the Mâconnais landscape of hills, vineyards, orchards, red-tiled farmhouses, and Romanesque churches. **Brancion** is a pretty hill village, **Chapaize** has an 11th-century church and there is a sumptuous Renaissance château at **Cormatin**. The village of **Taizé** is the center of a world-famous ecumenical community. To the north, **Chalon-sur-Saône** features the Musée Niepce, dedicated to the inventor of photography.

Cluny ㉒

Saône-et-Loire. 👥 *4,800.* 🚌 ℹ *6 rue Mercière (03 85 59 05 34).* ⛺ *Sat.* **www**.cluny-tourisme.com

The little town of Cluny is overshadowed by the ruins of its great abbey. The **Ancienne Abbaye de Cluny** was once the most powerful monastic foundation in Europe *(see pp48–9)*. The abbey was founded by William the Pious, Duke of Aquitaine in 910. Within 200 years, Cluny had become the head of a major reforming order with monasteries all over Europe. Its abbots were considered as powerful as monarchs or popes, and four of them are venerated as saints. By the 14th century, however, the system was in decline. The abbey was closed in 1790 and the church was later dismantled.

The guided tour presents the abbey remains, notably the Clocher de l'Eau Bénite (Holy Water Belltower), **Musée d'Art**, housed in the former abbot's palace, and its figured capitals displayed in the 13th-century flour store. In the town, don't miss the 12th-century **Eglise St-Marcel**.

Southwest of the town, the chapel in **Berzé-la-Ville** is decorated with superb 12th-century frescoes, similar to those once seen at Cluny.

Ancienne Abbaye de Cluny

Tel *03 85 59 15 93.* ○ *daily.* 📷 ☝

Musée d'Art

Palais Jean de Bourbon. ***Tel*** *03 85 59 15 93.* ○ *daily.* ● *Jan 1, May 1, Nov 1 & 11, Dec 25.* 📷 ♿

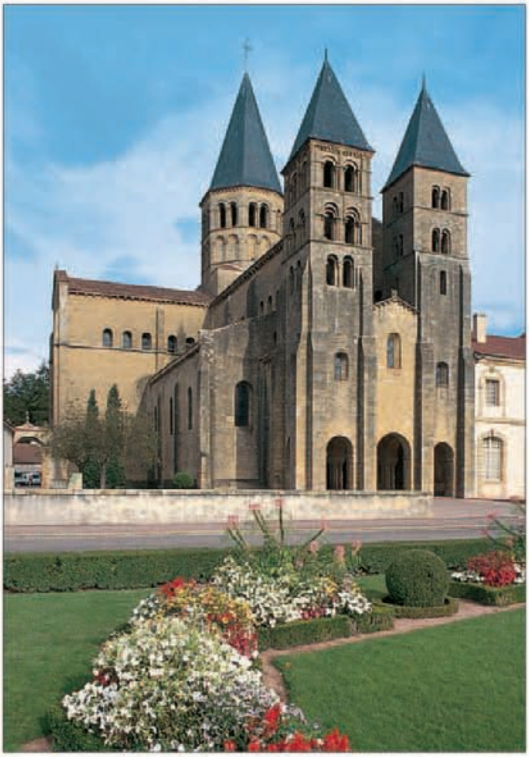
Paray-le-Monial ㉓

Saône-et-Loire. 👥 *10,000.* 🚉 🚌 ℹ *25 av Jean-Paul II (03 85 81 10 92).* ⛺ *Fri.* **www**.paraylemonial.fr

Dedicated to the cult of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, the **Basilique du Sacré-Coeur** has made Paray-le-Monial one of the most important sites of pilgrimage in modern France. Marguerite-Marie Alacoque, who was born here in 1647, had rather gory visions from which the cult later developed, sweeping across France in the 19th century. The church is a small version of the now lost abbey church of Cluny, with particularly harmonious and pure Romanesque architecture.

A visit to the **Musée de Paul Charnoz** provides an interesting insight into industrial artistic tile production from the 19th-century to the present.

Situated on place Guignaud is the ornate **Maison Jayet**, dating from the 16th century, which houses the town hall.

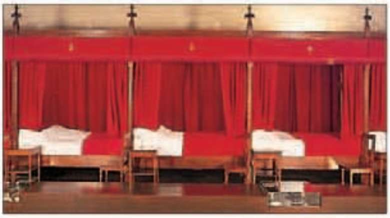


Basilique du Sacré-Coeur at Paray-le-Monial

Hôtel-Dieu

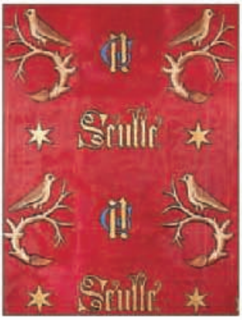
Christ-de-Pitié

After the Hundred Years' War, many of Beaune's inhabitants suffered the effects of poverty and famine. To remedy this, the chancellor, Nicolas Rolin, and his wife founded a hospice here in 1443, which was inspired by the architecture of Northern French hospitals. The Rolins provided an annual grant, and vines and salt-works for income. Today the hospice is considered a medieval jewel, with its superb geometric multicolored Burgundian roof tiles. It houses two religious masterpieces: the *Christ-de-Pitié* statue, carved from wood, and Rogier van der Weyden's polyptych.



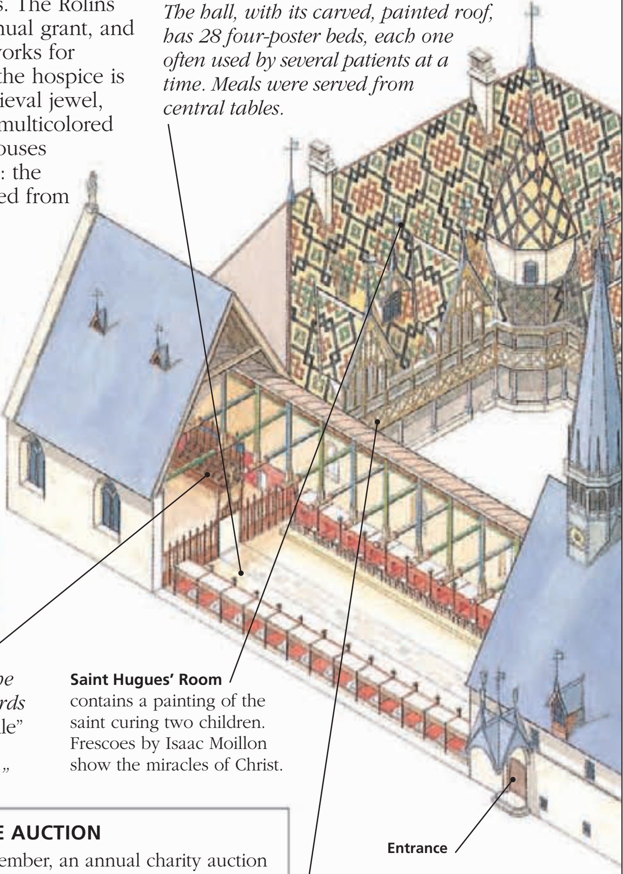
★ Great Hall of the Poor

The hall, with its carved, painted roof, has 28 four-poster beds, each one often used by several patients at a time. Meals were served from central tables.



Tribute to Rolin's Wife

A recurring motif features the entwined letters N and G, birds and stars, and the word "Seulle" *referring to Rolin's wife Guigone, his "one and only."*



Saint Hugues' Room contains a painting of the saint curing two children. Frescoes by Isaac Moillon show the miracles of Christ.

Entrance

Saint Anne's Room has a tableau of nuns working in what was once the linen room, and a colorful feast day tapestry.

ANNUAL CHARITY WINE AUCTION

On the third Sunday in November, an annual charity auction in Beaune is the centerpiece of three days of festivities known as *Les Trois Glorieuses*. Saturday sees the banquet of the Confrérie des Chevaliers du Tastevin at the Château Clos de Vougeot. On Sunday the auction of wine from the 151 acres (61 ha) of vineyards, owned by nearby hospitals, takes place. Its prices are the benchmark for the entire vintage. On Monday at La Paulée de Meursault there is a party where growers bring along bottles of their best vintages to enjoy.

Hospices de Beaune
1986
BEAUNE
Appellation Beaune Contrôlée
Cuvée Nicolas-Rolin
75 cl

Wine sold at the famous auction

STAR FEATURES

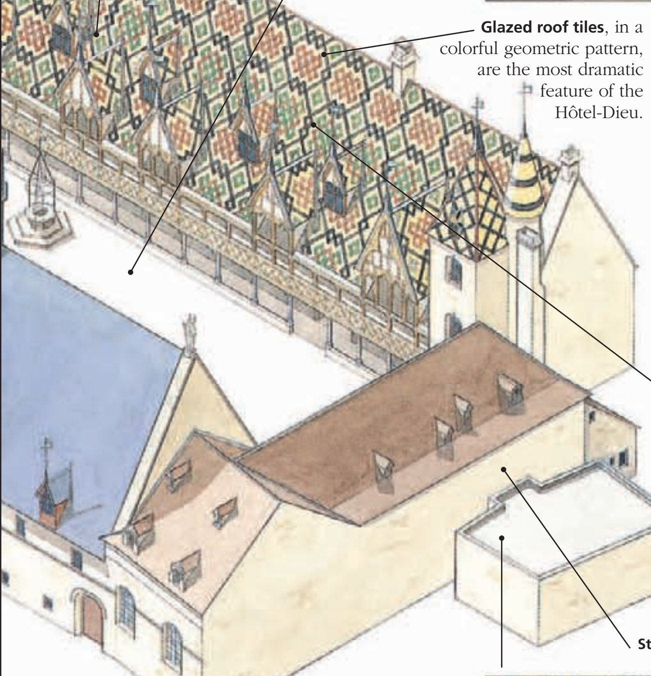
- ★ Great Hall
- ★ Last Judgment Polyptych by Rogier van der Weyden

Kitchen
The centerpiece of the kitchen is a Gothic fireplace with a dual hearth and a mechanical spit, made in 1698, which is turned by a wooden "robot."

VISITORS' CHECKLIST

Rue de L'Hôtel-Dieu, Beaune. ***Tel*** *03 80 24 45 00.* ○ *Apr–mid Nov: 9–6:30pm daily; mid-Nov–Mar: 9–11:30am, 2–5:30pm daily.* ♿ 📷 ☞ **Wine Auction** 3rd Sun Nov: Les Halles de Beaune *(03 80 24 45 00).* **www**.hospices-de-beaune.com

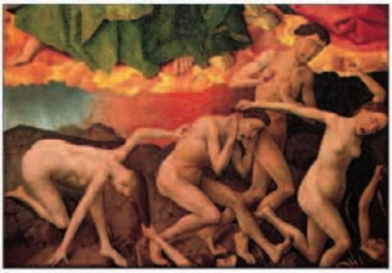
Cour d'Honneur
The buildings of Hôtel-Dieu are arranged around a splendid central courtyard. This is flanked by a wooden gallery, above which rise high dormer windows topped by weathervanes. The courtyard well is a fine example of Gothic wrought-iron work.



Glazed roof tiles, in a colorful geometric pattern, are the most dramatic feature of the Hôtel-Dieu.

Pharmacy
Such unusual potions as woodlouse powder, shrimps' eyes, and vomit nut powder are stored in these earthenware pots. Nearby is a bronze mortar used to prepare the remedies.

St-Louis' Room



★ Last Judgment Polyptych
The naked figures shown in Rogier van der Weyden's 15th-century polyptych were briefly given clothing in the 19th century. At the same time, the altarpiece was cut in half so that the outer and inner panels could be seen together.

Château de Pierreclos in the Mâconnais region

Brionnais ㉔

Saône-et-Loire. ✈ *Mâcon.*
🚆 *Paray-le-Monial, Roanne.*
🚌 *Paray-le-Monial.*
ℹ *Marcigny (03 85 25 39 06).*

The Brionnais is a small and peaceful rural district, squeezed between the river Loire and the Beaujolais foothills in the far south of Burgundy.

Its agricultural staple is the white Charolais cow, which can be seen grazing everywhere. For a closer look at this regional symbol, visit the lively cattle-market in **St-Christophe** on Thursday afternoons.

The area has an abundance of Romanesque churches, most of which are built of the local ocher-colored stone. The 11th-century church of **Anzy-le-Duc** has a majestic three-tiered polygonal tower and exquisitely carved capitals. **Semur-en-Brionnais** was the birthplace of Cluny's famous abbot St-Hugues. Its church is inspired by his great monastery. The church at **St-Julien-de-Jonzy** has a very finely carved tympanum.

Capital in St-Julien-de-Jonzy

A small town by the river Genette, **La Clayette** is graced by a château set in a lake. It is not open to the public, but has a vintage car museum and in summer is the setting for a *son et lumière* show.

Southeast of La Clayette the lonely **Montagne de Dun** rises just over 2,300 ft (700 m) and offers a panorama over the gentle, green Brionnais hills. This is some of the best picnic country in Burgundy, full of sleepy corners and quiet byways.

Mâcon ㉕

Saône-et-Loire. 👥 *36,000.* ✈
🚆 🚌 ℹ *1 pl Saint Pierre (03 85 21 07 07).* 🛒 *Sat.*
www.macon-tourism.com

At the frontier between Burgundy and the south, Mâcon is an industrial town and wine center on the Saône.

The lack of churches is due to fervent anticlericalism during the Revolution, when 14 were destroyed. A 17th-century convent has been turned into the **Musée des Ursulines**. Its collections include French and Flemish painting and an exhibition on the prehistoric site of Solutré. On the charming place aux Herbes, where the market is held, the **Maison de Bois** is a 15th-century wooden house covered with bizarre carvings.

🏛 Musée des Ursulines
Allée de Matisco. ***Tel*** *03 85 39 90 38.* ○ *Tue–Sat & Sun pm.* ● *Jan 1, May 1, Jul 14, Nov 1, Dec 25.* ♿

Environs

The great **Roche de Solutré** rises dramatically above the Pouilly-Fuissé vineyards in the Mâconnais district *(see p345).* Below the rock, finds from the Stone Ages have established it as a major archeological site.

Mâconnais is also the land of the Romantic poet Lamartine (1790–1869). Born in Mâcon, he spent his childhood at Milly Lamartine and later lived at Château de St-Point. **Château de Pierreclos** is associated with his epic poem *Jocelyn.*

Charolais cattle grazing on the gentle hills of the Brionnais

Franche-Comté

A region of woods and water, the Franche-Comté offers exceptional natural beauty combined with opportunities for canoeing, trekking, and skiing. Apart from towns well worth visiting, this is a region to explore in the wild. Glorious scenery with grottoes and cascading waterfalls can be found all along the Vallée du Doubs. Farther south are the spectacular sources of the rivers Lison and Loue. The Reculées is an area of extraordinary formations of ridges and waterfalls such as Baume-les-Messieurs. In Région des Lacs, the silent, peaceful lakes are surrounded by mountain peaks and virgin forests.

Nature at its purest at Source du Lison in the Franche-Comté

Cascades du Hérisson ㉖

Pays-des-Lacs. ℹ *Clairvaux-les-Lacs (03 84 25 27 47).* 🛒 *Wed.*

The village of Doucier, at the foot of the Pic de l'Aigle, is the starting point for the valley of the river Hérisson, one of the finest natural settings in the Jura. Leave the car at the park by the Moulin Jacquand and walk up the trail through the woods to a spectacular waterfall, the 213-ft (65-m) Cascade de L'Eventail, and beyond to the equally impressive Cascade du Grand Saut. The walk, which takes about two hours there and back, is steep at times and can be slippery, so sturdy shoes are essential.

Arbois ㉗

Jura. 👥 *3,600.* 🚆 ℹ *10 rue de l'Hôtel de Ville (03 84 66 55 50).* 🛒 *Fri.*
www.arbois.com

The jolly wine town of Arbois lies on the vine-covered banks of the river Cuisance. It is famous for the sherry-like *vin jaune* (yellow wine) of the district. On the north side of the town is **Maison de Pasteur**, the preserved house and laboratory of the great scientist Louis Pasteur (1822–95), the first to test vaccines on human beings.

Environs

Southeast of Dole is the 18th-century **Château d'Arlay** with immaculately kept gardens.

Dole ㉘

Jura. 👥 *28,000.* 🚆 🚌 ℹ *6 pl Grevy (03 84 72 11 22).* 🛒 *Tue, Thu, & Sat.*
www.dole.org

The busy town of Dole lies where the Doubs meets the Rhine-Rhône canal. The former capital of the Comté was always a symbol of the region's resistance to the French. The region had become used to relative independence, first under the Counts of Burgundy and then as part of the Holy Roman Empire. Though always French-speaking, its people did not appreciate the idea of the French absolute monarchy and, in 1636, endured a long siege. The town finally submitted to Louis XIV, first in 1668, and again in 1674.

There is a charming historic quarter in the center of town, full of winding alleys, houses dating back to the 15th century, and quiet inner courtyards. Place aux Fleurs offers an excellent view of this part of town and the mossy-roofed, 16th-century **Eglise Notre-Dame**.

Virgin and Child on the north portal of Eglise Notre-Dame, Dole

The Saline Royale at Arc-et-Senans

Arc-et-Senans ㉙

Doubs. 👥 *1,400.* 🚆 ℹ *Ancienne Saline Royale (03 81 57 43 21).* **www**.ot-arcetsenans.fr

Designated a World Heritage Site since 1982, the Saline Royale (royal salt works) at Arc-et-Senans were designed by the great French architect Claude-Nicolas Ledoux (1736–1806). He envisaged a development built in concentric circles around the main buildings. However, the only ones to be completed (in 1775) were the buildings used for salt production. Nevertheless, these show the staggering scale of Ledoux's idea: salt water was to be piped from Salins-les-Bains nearby, and fuel to reduce it was to come from the Chaux forest. The enterprise, which was never a success, was closed down in 1895, but the buildings remain.

The **Musée Ledoux Lieu du Sel** displays intriguing models of the grand projects imagined by the visionary architect.

🏛 Musée Ledoux Lieu du Sel
Saline Royale.
Tel *03 81 54 45 45.* ○ *daily.* ● *Jan, Dec 25.* 🎟 ✋ 🎧 ♿ *gr.floor.*

Champlitte ㉚

Haute Saône. 👥 *1,900.* 🚌 ℹ *33B rue de la République (03 84 67 67 19).*

In the small town of Champlitte, the **Musée des Arts et Traditions Populaires** was created by a local shepherd who collected artifacts connected with disappearing local customs. One of the poignant displays housed in this Renaissance château recalls the emigration of 400 citizens to Mexico in the mid-19th century.

🏛 Musée des Arts et Traditions Populaires
Pl de l'Eglise. ***Tel*** *03 84 67 82 00.*
○ *Apr–Jun & Sep: Wed–Fri (Sat–Sun pms only); Jul–Aug: Mon–Fri (Sat–Sun pms only); Oct–Mar: Wed–Mon pms.* ● *Jan 1, Nov 1, Dec 25.* 🎟 ✋ 🎧

Besançon ㉛

Doubs. 👥 *120,000.* 🚆 🚌 ℹ *2 pl de la Première Armée Française (03 81 80 92 55).* 🛒 *Tue–Sat & Sun am.* **www**.besancon-tourisme.com

Besançon supplanted Dole as the capital of the Franche-Comté in the 17th century. It began as an ecclesiastical center and is now an industrial one, specializing in precision engineering. The stately architecture of the old town, with its elegant wrought-iron work, is a 17th-century legacy.

Behind the fine Renaissance façade of the Palais Granvelle, in the grande rue, is the **Musée du Temps**, a fine collection of 'time-pieces' of all ages – a timely tribute to Besançon's renown as a clock and watch-making center. An interactive exhibition on the third floor invites reflection on the relativity of the notion of time.

Farther along the same street are the birthplaces of novelist Victor Hugo (1802–85) at No. 140 and the Lumière brothers *(see p63)* at place Victor Hugo. Behind **Porte Noire**, a Roman arch, is the 12th-century Cathédrale St-Jean. In its bell-tower is the **Horloge Astronomique** with its automatons that pop out on the hour.

The stunning **Musée des Beaux Arts et d'Archéologie** occupies the old corn market. Its collection includes works by Bellini, Cranach, Rubens, Fragonard, Boucher, Ingres, Goya, Matisse, and Picasso.

Vauban's citadel overlooking the river Doubs has magnificent views and houses the intriguing **Musée Comtois** with a collection of local artifacts and a good children's zoo.

🏛 Musée du Temps
Palais Granvelle, 96 grande rue.
Tel *03 81 87 81 50.* ○ *Tue–Sun.* ● *Jan 1, May 1, Nov 1, Dec 25.* 🎟 ✋ ♿

⛪ Horloge Astronomique
Rue de la Convention. ***Tel*** *03 81 81 12 76.* ○ *Apr–Sep: Wed–Mon; (Thu–Mon winter).* ● *Jan, May 1, Nov 1 & 11, Dec 25.* 🎟 ✋

🏛 Musée des Beaux Arts et d'Archéologie
1 pl de la Révolution. ***Tel*** *03 81 87 80 49.* ○ *Wed–Mon.* 🎟 *free Sun.* 📷 ♿

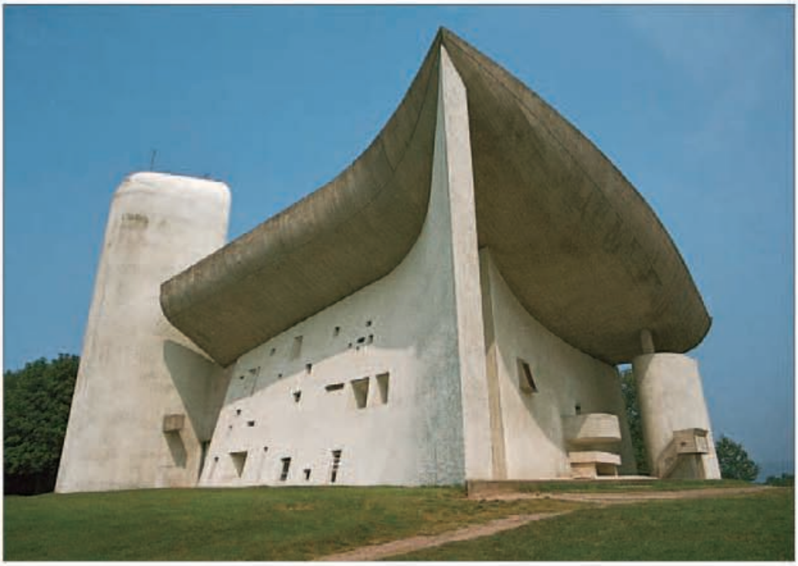
🏛 Musée Comtois
La Citadelle, rue des Fusillés de la Résistance. ***Tel*** *03 81 87 83 83.* ○ *Apr–Sep: daily; Oct–Mar: Wed–Mon.* ● *Tue in winter, Jan 1, Dec 25.* 🎟 ✋ 🎧 📷

The fantastic astronomical clock in Besançon, made in 1857–60

Ornans ㉜

Doubs. 👥 *4,300.* 🚌 ℹ *7 rue Pierre Vernier (03 81 62 21 50).* 🛒 *3rd Tue of month*

The great Realist painter Gustave Courbet was born at Ornans in 1819. He painted the town in every possible light. His *Enterrement à Ornans* proved to be one of



The striking Chapelle Notre-Dame-du-Haut by Le Corbusier at Ronchamp

the most influential paintings of the 19th century. This delightful riverside town shows Courbet's paintings in his childhood home, now turned into the **Musée Courbet**.

🏛 Musée Courbet
Pl Robert Fernier. ***Tel*** *03 81 62 23 30.* ● *for renovations until end 2010.* ♿ ♿ **www**.musee-courbet.com

Environs
A canoeist's paradise, the **Vallée de la Loue** is the loveliest in the Jura. The D67 follows the river from Ornans eastward to Ouhans, from where it is only a 15-minute walk to its magnificent source. Various belvederes offer splendid views over the area.

Southwest of Ornans, the spectacular **Source du Lison** *(see p349)* is a 20-minute walk from Nans-sous-Ste-Anne.

Belfort ㉝

Territoire de Belfort. 👥 *52,000.* 🚆 🚌 ℹ *2 bis rue Clemenceau (03 84 55 90 90).* 🧺 *Wed–Sun.*
www.ot-belfort.fr

The symbol of Belfort is an enormous pink sandstone lion. It was built (rather than carved) by Frédéric Bartholdi (1834–1904), whose other major undertaking was the Statue of Liberty.

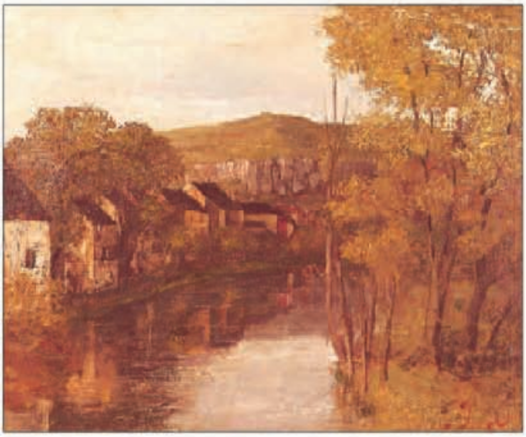
Belfort's immensely strong **citadel**, designed by Vauban under Louis XIV, withstood three sieges, in 1814, 1815, and 1870. Today this remarkable array of fortifications provides an interesting walk and extensive views of the surroundings. The **Musée d'Art et d'Histoire**, housed in some of the billets, displays models of the original fortifications as well as regional art and artifacts (closed Tuesdays).

Ronchamp ㉞

Haute Saône. 👥 *3,000.* 🚆
ℹ *14 pl du 14 juillet*
(03 84 63 50 82). 🧺 *Sat.*
www.ot-ronchamp.fr

Le Corbusier's **Chapelle Notre-Dame-du-Haut** dominates this former miners' town. A sculpture rather than a building, its swelling concrete form was finalized in 1955. Inside, light, shape, and space form a unity.

There is also a **Musée de la Mine** evoking the industry and the life of local miners.



Le Miroir d'Ornans **in the Musée Courbet, Ornans**

THE MASSIF CENTRAL

ALLIER · AVEYRON · CANTAL · CORRÈZE · CREUSE · HÂUTE-LOIRE
HAUTE-VIENNE · LOZÈRE · PUY DE DOME

The Massif Central is a region of strange, wild beauty – one of France's best-kept secrets. It is surprisingly little known beyond its sprinkling of spas and the major cities of Clermont-Ferrand, Vichy, and Limoges. However, the new autoroutes through the heart of its uplands have started to open up this previously remote region.

The huge central plateau of ancient granite and crystalline rock that makes up the Massif Central embraces the dramatic landscapes of the Auvergne, Limousin, Aveyron, and Lozère. Once a testing crossroads for pilgrims, and strung with giant volcanoes, it is a region of unsuspected richness, from the spectacular town of Le Puy-en-Velay to the unique treasures at Conques.

With its crater lakes and hot springs, the Auvergne is the Massif Central's lush volcanic core, an outdoor paradise offering activities from hiking in summer to skiing in winter. It also has some of France's most beautiful Romanesque churches, medieval castles, and Renaissance palaces. To the east are the mountain ranges of Forez, Livardois, and Velay; to the west are the giant chains of extinct volcanoes, the Monts Dômes, Monts Dore, and the Monts du Cantal. The Limousin, on the northwestern edge of the Massif Central, is gentler country with green pastures and blissfully empty roads.

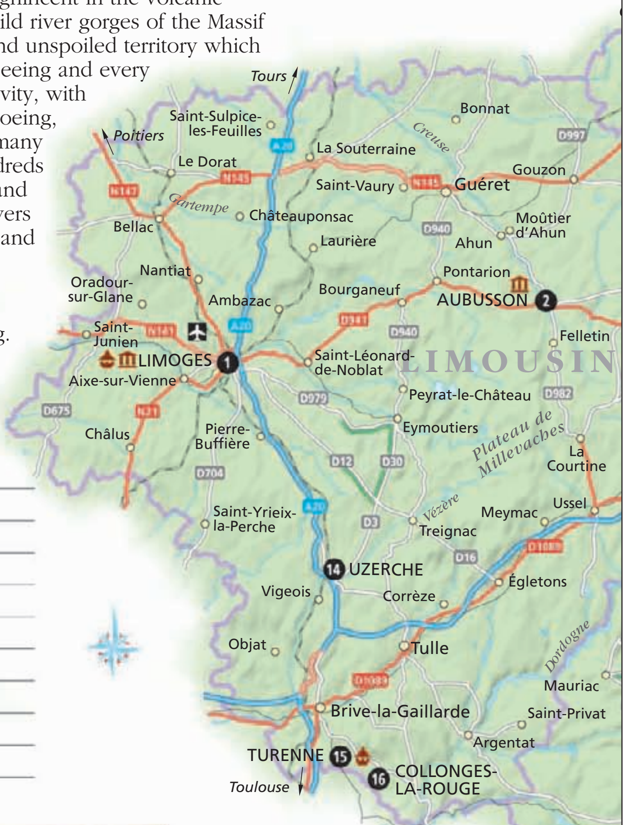
The Aveyron spreads into the southwest from the Aubrac mountains, carrying with it the rivers Lot, Aveyron, and Tarn through gorges and valleys with their cliff-hanging villages. To the east in the Lozère are the Grands Causses, the vast, isolated uplands of the Cévennes. These barren plateaus give farmers a poor living, but have been a favorite route with adventurous travelers across the centuries.

La Bourboule, a spa town in the Monts Dore

◁ **The summit of Puy Mary, 5,863 ft (1,787 m), offering a superb view to walkers who attempt the ascent**

Exploring the Massif Central

Nature is at its most magnificent in the volcanic mountain ranges and wild river gorges of the Massif Central. This is a vast and unspoiled territory which offers spectacular sightseeing and every imaginable outdoor activity, with rafting, paragliding, canoeing, and hiking among the many choices. There are hundreds of churches, châteaux, and museums to nourish lovers of history, architecture, and art; and good, hearty regional cooking and wonderful local wines for lovers of good living.

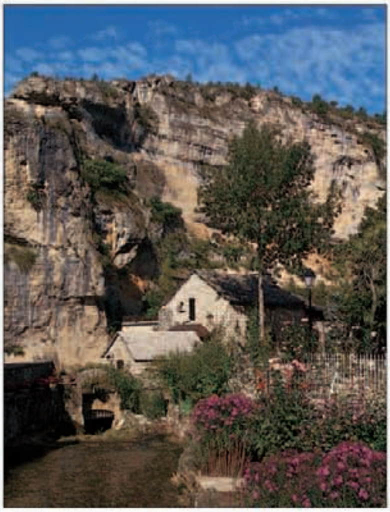

Tours
Poitiers
Saint-Sulpice-les-Feuilles
Bonnat
Creuse
D997
La Souterraine
Le Dorat
Gouzon
N145
N147
Saint-Vaury
Guéret
Gartempe
Châteauponsac
Bellac
D940
Moûtier d'Ahun
Ahun
Laurière
Nantiat
Pontarion
Oradour-sur-Glane
Bourganeuf
AUBUSSON 2
Ambazac
A20
D941
Saint-Junien
N141
Felletin
LIMOGES 1
Saint-Léonard-de-Noblat
LIMOUSIN
Aixe-sur-Vienne
D979
Peyrat-le-Château
D982
D675
N21
Eymoutiers
Plateau de Millevaches
Châlus
Pierre-Buffière
D12
D30
La Courtine
D704
Vézère
Ussel
Saint-Yrieix-la-Perche
D3
Treignac
Meymac
D1089
D16
14 UZERCHE
Égletons
Vigeois
Corrèze
Objat
Tulle
Dordogne
Mauriac
Brive-la-Gaillarde
Saint-Privat
Argentat
TURENNE 15
Toulouse
16 COLLONGES-LA-ROUGE
Saint-Mamet-la-Salvetat
N122
Maurs
Lot
Decazeville
D840
Rignac
Aveyron
Naucelle
Toulouse
Carcassonne

0 kilometers 25

0 miles 25

KEY

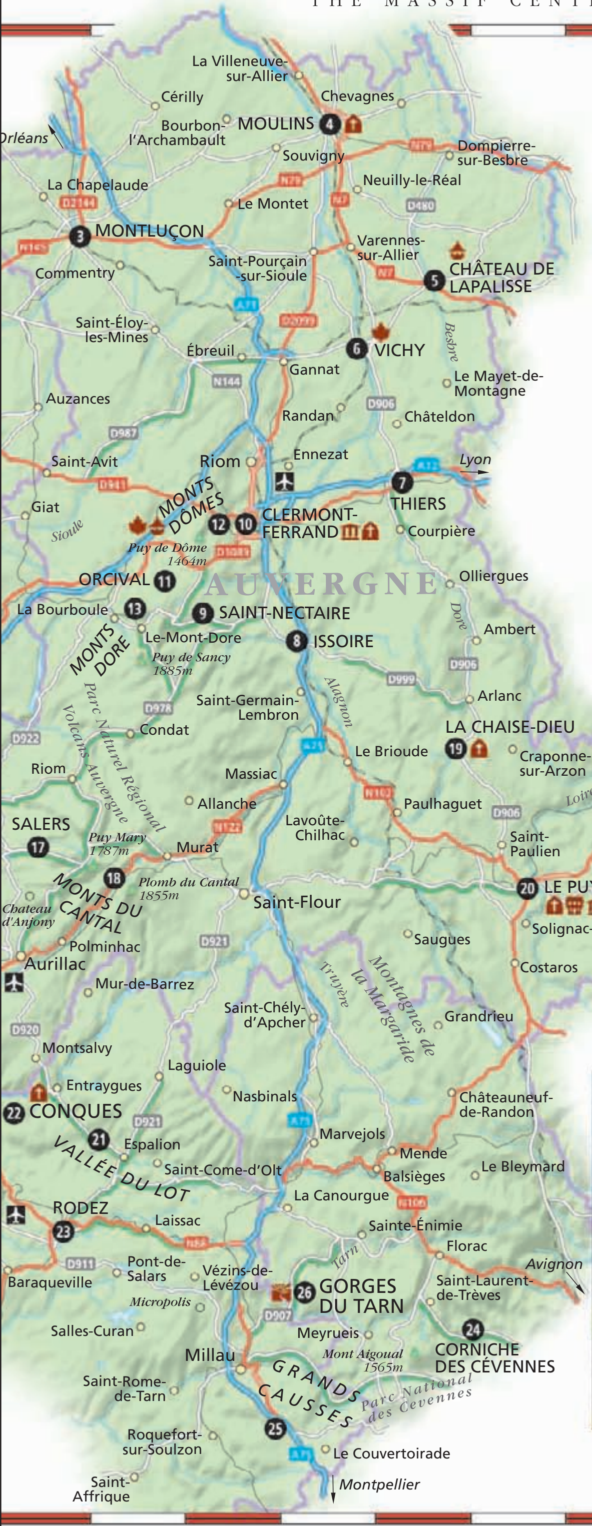
- Highway
- Major road
- Secondary road
- Minor road
- Scenic route
- Main railroad
- Minor railroad
- Regional border
- ▲ Summit



Limestone cliffs of the Gorges du Tarn

GETTING AROUND

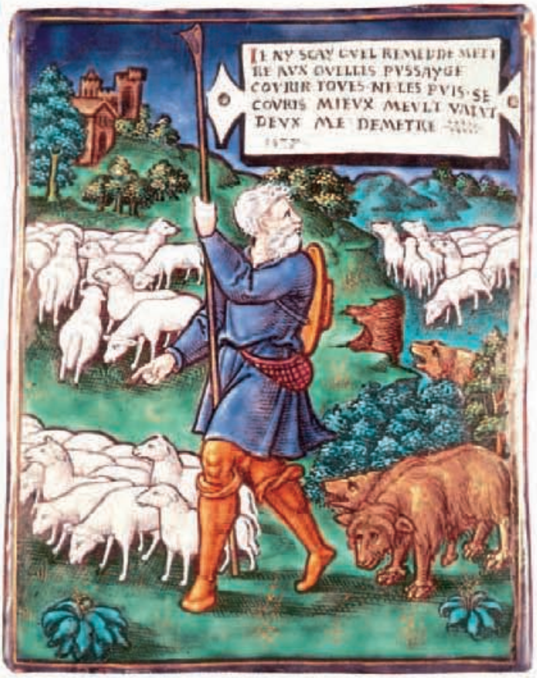
There is a good air and rail service connecting Paris with the major towns of Limoges, Clermont-Ferrand, and Vichy. Many of the most interesting towns and sights are easily accessible only by car, and motorail from Calais to Brive is an effortless way of getting to the region with a car. Most minor roads are well kept, but slow going in the mountains. A few roads are vertiginous, especially the road to the summit of Puy Mary, which is utterly breathtaking. The A71/A75 through the Auvergne is a magnificent road (and toll-free).


La Villeneuve-sur-Allier
Cérilly
Chevagnes
Orléans
Bourbon-l'Archambault
MOULINS
4
Souvigny
N79
Dompierre-sur-Besbre
La Chapelaude
D2144
N79
Neuilly-le-Réal
Le Montet
N7
D480
3
MONTLUÇON
N145
Varennes-sur-Allier
Commentry
Saint-Pourçain-sur-Sioule
N7
5
CHÂTEAU DE LAPALISSE
A71
D2009
Saint-Éloy-les-Mines
Besbre
Ébreuil
6
VICHY
Gannat
N144
Le Mayet-de-Montagne
Auzances
D906
Randan
Châteldon
D987
Ennezat
Lyon
Riom
Saint-Avit
A72
D941
MONTS DÔMES
7
THIERS
Giat
12
10
CLERMONT-FERRAND
Courpière
Sioule
Puy de Dôme 1464m
D2089
ORCIVAL
11
AUVERGNE
Olliergues
La Bourboule
13
9
SAINT-NECTAIRE
MONTS DORE
Le-Mont-Dore
Dore
Ambert
Puy de Sancy 1885m
8
ISSOIRE
D906
Parc Naturel Régional Volcans Auvergne
D999
Alagnon
D978
Saint-Germain-Lembron
Arlanc
D922
Condat
LA CHAISE-DIEU
19
St-Etienne Lyon
A75
Le Brioude
Craponne-sur-Arzon
Riom
Massiac
Monistrol-sur-Loire
N102
Loire
Allanche
Paulhaguet
D906
SALERS
N122
Lavoûte-Chilhac
N88
Montfaucon
17
Puy Mary 1787m
Murat
Saint-Paulien
Tence
18
Plomb du Cantal 1855m
MONTS DU CANTAL
20
LE PUY-EN-VELAY
Chateau d'Anjony
Saint-Flour
Solignac-sur-Loire
Polminhac
D921
Saugues
Aurillac
Costaros
Mur-de-Barrez
Truyère
Montagnes de la Margeride
Saint-Chély-d'Apcher
Grandrieu
D920
Montsalvy
Laguiole
Entraygues
Nasbinals
Châteauneuf-de-Randon
22
CONQUES
D921
A75
21
Marvejols
Espalion
Mende
VALLÉE DU LOT
Le Bleymard
Saint-Come-d'Olt
Balsièges
La Canourgue
RODEZ
N106
23
Laissac
Sainte-Énimie
N88
Florac
D911
Tarn
Avignon
Pont-de-Salars
Vézins-de-Lévézou
Baraqueville
26
GORGES DU TARN
Saint-Laurent-de-Trèves
Micropolis
D907
24
Salles-Curan
Meyrueis
CORNICHE DES CÉVENNES
Millau
Mont Aigoual 1565m
GRANDS CAUSSES
Parc National des Cevennes
Saint-Rome-de-Tarn
25
Roquefort-sur-Soulzon
A75
Le Couvertoirade
Saint-Affrique
Montpellier

SIGHTS AT A GLANCE

- Aubusson ❷
- Château de Lapalisse ❺
- Clermont-Ferrand ❿
- Collonges-la-Rouge ⓰
- Conques ㉒
- Corniche des Cévennes ㉔
- Gorges du Tarn ㉖
- Grands Causses ㉕
- Issoire ❽
- La Chaise-Dieu ⓳
- Le Puy-en-Velay ⓴
- Limoges ❶
- Montluçon ❸
- Monts Dômes ⓬
- Monts Dore ⓭
- Monts du Cantal ⓲
- Moulins ❹
- Orcival ⓫
- Rodez ㉓
- St-Nectaire ❾
- Salers ⓱
- Thiers ❼
- Turenne ⓯
- Uzerche ⓮
- Vallée du Lot ㉑
- Vichy ❻

Autumn view of the foothills of Puy Mary in the Monts du Cantal



A Limoges enamel plaque, *The Bad Shepherd*

Limoges ①

Haute-Vienne. 👥 *200,000.* ✈ 🚆 🚌 ℹ *12 bd de Fleurus (05 55 34 46 87).* 🛒 *daily.*
www.tourismelimoges.com

The capital of the Limousin has two hearts: the old Cité and the rival château on an adjacent rise, now the commercial center of the modern city. The Cité was ravaged by the Black Prince during the Hundred Years' War and today it is a quiet place of half-timbered houses and narrow streets.

It was not until the 1770s that Limoges became synonymous with porcelain. The legendary local ware is on display at the superb **Musée National Adrien-Dubouché**. More than 10,000 exhibits trace the history of ceramics. The **Musée Municipal de l'Evêché** is currently closed but usually houses Limousin enamels, as well as works by Impressionist painters such as Renoir, who was born in the city. This area was a center of Resistance operations in World War II; the **Musée de la Résistance et de la Déportation** has a collection of exhibits relating to Resistance acitivities.

🏛 **Musée National Adrien-Dubouché**
Pl Winston Churchill. ***Tel*** *05 55 33 08 50.* ○ *Wed–Mon.* ● *Jan 1, May 1, Dec 25.* ✋ 🎧
www.musee-adriendebouche.fr

🏛 **Musée Municipal de l'Evêché, Musée de l'Email**
Pl de la Cathédrale. ***Tel*** *05 55 45 98 10.* ● *closed until 2010.*

🏛 **Musée de la Résistance et de la Déportation**
Rue de la Règle, Jardin de L'Evêché. ***Tel*** *05 55 45 98 23.*
○ *Wed–Mon (phone for times).*

Environs

Resistance activity in the Limousin led to severe reprisals. On June 10, 1944 at the village of **Oradour-sur-Glane**, 16 miles (25 km) NW of Limoges, SS troops burned alive the entire population. The ruins have been kept as a shrine, and a new village built nearby. The lively town of St-Junien close by has been a glove-making town since the Middle Ages, and it still supplies today's designers with luxury leather items.

Aubusson ②

Creuse. 👥 *5,000.* 🚌 ℹ *rue Vieille (05 55 66 32 12).* 🛒 *Sat.*
www.ot-aubusson.fr

Aubusson owes its renown to the exceptionally pure waters of the Creuse, perfect for making the delicately colored dyes used for tapestries and rugs. Tapestry production was at its zenith in the 16th and 17th centuries, but by the end of the 18th century the Revolution and patterned wallpaper had swept away the clientele.

In the 1940s, Aubusson was revived, largely due to the artist Jean Lurçat, who persuaded other modern artists to design for tapestry. The **Musée Départemental de la Tapisserie** displays a permanent collection of these modern works. All 30 workshops welcome visitors – at the **Manufacture St Jean** you can watch tapestries and custom-made carpets being made by hand and restored.

🏛 **Musée Départemental de la Tapisserie**
Av des Lissiers. ***Tel*** *05 55 83 08 30.*
○ *Wed–Mon (Tue pm Jul–Aug).* ● *1 week Apr, 1 week Nov.* ✋ ♿

🏛 **Manufacture St Jean**
3 rue St Jean. ***Tel*** *05 55 66 10 08.*
○ *Mon–Fri.* 📷 ✋

Environs

A single street of 15th-century houses and a Roman bridge comprise **Moûtier-d'Ahun**,

Tapestry restoration at the Manufacture St Jean in Aubusson

Romanesque church at Moûtier-d’Ahun near Aubusson

tucked into the lush Creuse valley. Vestiges of a Benedictine abbey can still be detected in the half-Romanesque, half-Gothic church with its elaborate stone portal. The choir has wooden stalls, for which it is worth paying a visit to the church. They are masterpieces of late 17th-century carving with fantastical and intricately worked motifs of flora and fauna representing the many different facets of Good and Evil in figurative form. Today there is a garden where the nave once was.

Montluçon ❸

Allier. 👥 *45,000.* 🚆 🚌 ℹ *67 ter bd de Courtais (04 70 05 11 44).* ⛱ *Wed, Sat, Sun.* **www**.montlucontourisme.com

Montluçon is the economic center of the region, a small town with a medieval core. At its heart there is a Bourbon château which now houses temporary exhibitions. **Jardin Wilson**, a pleasant *jardin à la française* in the medieval quarter, sits on the original ramparts of the town. Mostly destroyed in the 18th century, little remains of the ramparts now. The recently restored rose garden and spectacular flower beds are worth a visit. The 12th-century **Eglise de St-Pierre** is a surprise, with giant stone columns and a huge barrel-vaulted ceiling.

Moulins ❹

Allier. 👥 *23,000.* 🚆 🚌 ℹ *rue François Péron (04 70 44 14 14).* ⛱ *Tue & Fri.* **www**.pays-bourbon.com

Capital of the Bourbonnais and seat of the Bourbon Dukes since the 10th century, Moulins flourished during the early Renaissance. Moulins’ most celebrated sight is the Flamboyant Gothic **Cathédrale Notre-Dame**, where members of the Bourbon court appear amid the saints in the 15th- and 16th-century stained-glass windows. The treasury contains a luminous 15th-century Virgin and Child triptych by the “Master of Moulins.” Benefactors Pierre II, Duke of Bourbon, and his wife Anne de Beaujeu, bedecked in embroidery and jewels, are shown being introduced to a less richly dressed Madonna.

The tower keep and the single remaining wing of the Bourbon **Vieux Château** house a superb collection of sculpture, painting, and decorative art from the 12th to the 16th centuries. Housed in the former cavalry barracks is a magnificent collection of 10,000 theatrical costumes.

✝ Cathédrale Notre-Dame
Pl de la Déportation. ***Tel*** *04 70 20 89 65.* **Treasury** ○ *Mon–Sat.*
✋ ♿

Stained-glass windows at the Cathédrale Notre-Dame in Moulins

Château de La Palisse ❺

Allier. ***Tel*** *04 70 99 36 67.*
○ *Easter–Oct: daily.*

In the early 16th century, the Marshal of France, Jacques II de Chabannes, hired Florentine architects to reconstruct the feudal château-fort at Lapalisse, creating a refined Renaissance castle, which has been inhabited ever since by his descendants. The *salon doré* (gilded room) has a beamed ceiling paneled in gold and two huge 15th-century Flemish tapestries showing the Crusader Knight Godefroy de Bouillon and Greek hero Hector, two of the nine classic braves of chivalric legend.

Environs

From Lapalisse, the D480 leads up through the beautiful Besbre valley past a handful of other small, well-preserved châteaus, including **Château de Thoury**.

Château de Thoury
Dompierre. ***Tel*** *04 70 42 00 41.*
Courtyard and exterior ○ *Apr–May: Sat, Sun & public hols (pms only); Jun–Nov: daily.*

Gilded ceiling, Château de La Palisse

Vichy ❻

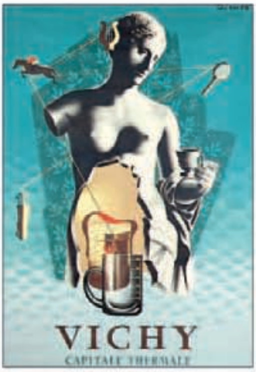
Allier. *27,000.* ℹ *19 rue du Parc (04 70 98 71 94).* *Wed.*
www.vichytourisme.com

Interior of the original Thermal Establishment building in Vichy

This small city on the river Allier has long been known for its hot and cold springs, and reputed cures for rheumatism, arthritis, and digestive complaints. The letter-writer Madame de Sévigné and the daughters of Louis XV visited in the late 17th and 18th centuries – the former compared the showers to "a rehearsal for Purgatory." The visits of Napoleon III in the 1860s put Vichy on the map and made taking the waters fashionable. The small town was spruced up and became a favorite among the French nobility and the world's wealthy middle classes. These days, the grand old Thermal Establishment, built in 1900, has been turned into shopping galleries. The modern baths are state-of-the-art and strictly for medical purposes. A doctor's prescription and a reservation 30 days in advance are required for all treatments.

Vichy's fortunes changed for the better once again in the 1960s with the damming of the Allier, creating a huge lake in the middle of town, which rapidly became a thriving center for watersports and international events. For a small fee, you can have a taste of sports from aikido to waterskiing or learn canoeing on the 2-mile (3-km) long artificial river.

The focal point of life in Vichy is the **Parc des Sources** in the center of town, with its turn-of-the-century bandstand (afternoon concerts in season), Belle Epoque glass-roofed shopping galleries, and the Grand Casino and Opera House. Here there is gambling every afternoon and musical performances in the evenings, and an atmosphere of gaiety pervades. Also open to the public are the beautiful bronze taps of the **Source**



Vichy poster (about 1930–50) by Badia-Vilato

Célestin, in a riverside park containing vestiges of a convent bearing the same name. Only by making an effort to imagine the city in grainy black-and-white newsreel style is there the slightest reminder of the wartime Vichy government which was based in the town from 1940–44 *(see p65)*.

Source Célestin
Bd du Président Kennedy. ○ *daily.* ● *Dec–Jan.* ♿

Thiers ❼

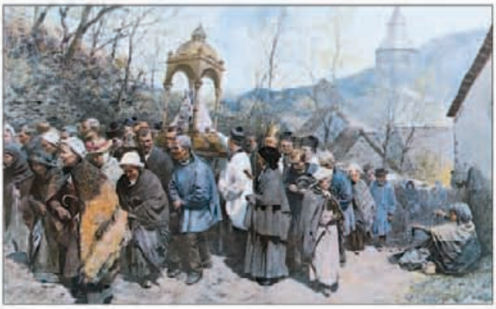
Puy de Dôme. 👥 *13,500.* 🚆 🚌
ℹ *Pl de Pirou (04 73 80 65 65).*
⛺ *Thu & Sat.* **www**.ville-thiers.fr

According to the writer La Bruyère, Thiers "seems painted on the slope of the hill," hanging dramatically as it does on a ravine over a sharp bend in the river Durolle. The city has been renowned for silverware since the Middle Ages, when legend has it that Crusaders brought back techniques of metalwork from the Middle East. With grindstones powered by dozens of waterfalls on the opposite bank of the river, Thiers produced everything from table knives to guillotine blades, and silverware remains its major industry today, much of it on display in the Silverware Museum, the **Musée de la Coutellerie**.

The Old Town is filled with mysterious quarters like "the Corner of Chance" and "Hell's Hollow," honeycombed with tortuous streets and well-restored 14th–17th-century houses. Many have elaborately carved wooden façades, like the Maison du Pirou in place Pirou. The view to the west from the rampart terrace, toward Monts Dômes and Monts Dore, is particularly splendid at sunset.

PILGRIMAGES AND OSTENSIONS

Parishes in the Auvergne and the Limousin are renowned for honoring their saints in outdoor processions. Ascension Day sees the Virgin of Orcival carried above the village by night, accompanied by gypsies and their children for baptism. Every seven years a score of villages in the Limousin hold *Ostensions*, when the saints' relics are paraded through the streets into the surrounding woods. The *Ostension* season begins the Sunday after Easter and runs until June. The next event in the seven-year cycle will be held in 2009.



The Virgin of Orcival, carried in procession above the village (1903)

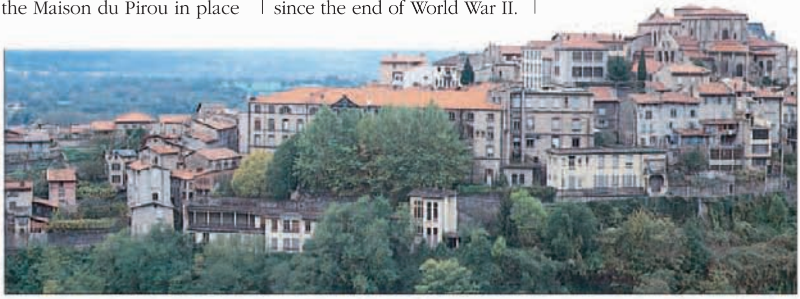
Musée de la Coutellerie
58 rue de la Coutellerie. ***Tel*** *04 73 80 58 86.* ○ *Jul & Aug: daily; Oct–Jun: Tue–Sun.* ● *Jan–mid-Feb, May 1, Nov 1, & Dec 25.* 📷 ♿
www.musee-coutellerie-thiers.com

Issoire ❽

Puy de Dôme. 👥 *15,000.* 🚆 🚌
ℹ *pl Charles de Gaulle (04 73 89 15 90).* ⛺ *Sat.* **www**.sejours-issoire.com

Most of old Issoire was destroyed in the 16th-century Wars of Religion. The present-day town has been an important industrial center since the end of World War II. Not only does Issoire have a thriving aeronautical tradition, it is also a mecca for glider pilots who come from miles around to take advantage of the strong local air currents.

Issoire's colorful 12th-century abbey church of **St-Austremoine** is one of the great Romanesque churches of the region. The capitals depict scenes from the *Life of Christ* (one of the Apostles at the Last Supper has fallen asleep at table), and imaginary demons and beasts. The 15th-century fresco of the *Last Judgment* shows Bosch-like figures of sinners being cast into the mouth of a dragon or carted off to hell. The nearby Tour de l'Horloge has scenes of Renaissance history.



Thiers from the south, spreading over the slopes above the river Durolle

St-Nectaire ⑨

Puy de Dôme. 👥 *750.* 🚌 ℹ *Les Grands Thermes (04 73 88 50 86).* ⊖ *Jul–Aug: Sun am.*
www.ville-saint-nectaire.fr

The Auvergne is noted for Romanesque churches. The **Eglise St-Nectaire** in the upper village of St-Nectaire-le Haut, with its soaring, elegant proportions, is one of the most beautiful. The 103 stone capitals, 22 of them polychrome, are vividly carved, and the treasury includes a gold bust of St-Baudime and a wooden Notre-Dame-du-Mont-Cornadore, both marvels of 12th-century workmanship. The lower village, St-Nectaire-le-Bas, has more than 40 hot and cold springs.

Environs
The 12th-century citadel of **Château de Murol**, partially in ruins, offers costumed guides demonstrating medieval life and knightly pursuits. It is wonderful for children.

Château de Murol
Murol. ***Tel*** *04 73 26 02 00.* ○ *May–Aug: daily; also open Sep & Nov–Apr but call for hours.* ♿ ✋ 📷 **www**.chateaudemurol.fr

Fontaine d'Amboise (1515) in Clermont-Ferrand

Clermont-Ferrand ⑩

Puy de Dôme. 👥 *141,000.* ✈ 🚆 🚌 ℹ *pl de la Victoire (04 73 98 65 00).* ⊖ *Mon–Sat.*
www.clermont-fd.com

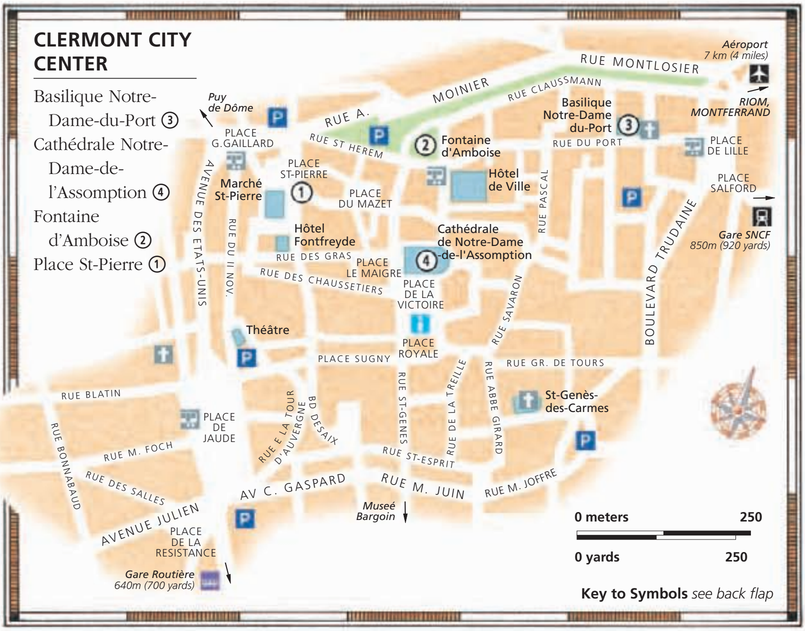
Clermont-Ferrand began as two distinct – and rival – cities, united only in 1630. Clermont is a lively commercial center and student town, with thriving cafés and restaurants. It was a Celtic settlement before the Roman era, had a cathedral as early as the 5th century, and by 1095 was significant enough for the pope to announce the First Crusade there. The Counts of Auvergne, challenging the episcopal power of Clermont, made their base in what is now old Montferrand, a short drive from Clermont city center. Built on a bastide pattern, it is a time warp of quiet streets and Renaissance houses.

Clermont's more ancient origins are well illustrated at the **Musée Bargoin** with its remarkable collections of locally found Roman domestic artifacts (closed Mondays).

Place St-Pierre is Clermont's principal marketplace, with a daily food market – especially good on Saturdays. Nearby, the pedestrianized rue du Port leads steeply downhill from the **Fontaine d'Amboise** (1515) to the **Basilique Notre-Dame-du-Port**. This is one of the most important Romanesque churches in the region. The stone interior is beautifully proportioned, with a magnificent raised choir and vivid carved capitals – Charity battles Avarice, in the form of two knights. The church underwent extensive renovation in 2008.

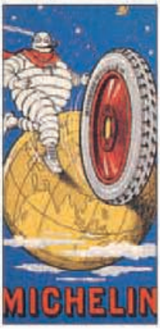
The contrast with the black lava **Cathédrale Notre-Dame-de-l'Assomption** is startling, from austere 12th-century Romanesque to high-flying 13th-century Gothic. The

Raised choir in the Basilique Notre-Dame-du-Port


CLERMONT CITY CENTER
Basilique Notre-Dame-du-Port ③
Cathédrale Notre-Dame-de-l'Assomption ④
Fontaine d'Amboise ②
Place St-Pierre ①
Puy de Dôme
Aéroport 7 km (4 miles)
RIOM, MONTFERRAND
RUE MONTLOSIER
RUE CLAUSSMANN
RUE A. MOINIER
RUE ST HEREM
PLACE G.GAILLARD
PLACE ST-PIERRE
Marché St-Pierre
Fontaine d'Amboise
Hôtel de Ville
Basilique Notre-Dame du-Port
RUE DU PORT
PLACE DE LILLE
PLACE SALFORD
Gare SNCF 850m (920 yards)
BOULEVARD TRUDAINE
RUE PASCAL
PLACE DU MAZET
Hôtel Fontfreyde
RUE DES GRAS
PLACE LE MAIGRE
Cathédrale de Notre-Dame -de-l'Assomption
RUE DES CHAUSSETIERS
PLACE DE LA VICTOIRE
AVENUE DES ETATS-UNIS
RUE DU 11 NOV.
Théâtre
PLACE SUGNY
PLACE ROYALE
RUE SAVARON
RUE GR. DE TOURS
St-Genès-des-Carmes
RUE BLATIN
RUE BONNABAUD
PLACE DE JAUDE
RUE M. FOCH
RUE DES SALLES
RUE E LA TOUR D'AUVERGNE
BD DESAIX
RUE ST-GENES
RUE DE LA TREILLE
RUE ABBE GIRARD
RUE ST-ESPRIT
AV C. GASPARD
RUE M. JUIN
RUE M. JOFFRE
Musée Bargoin
AVENUE JULIEN
PLACE DE LA RESISTANCE
Gare Routière 640m (700 yards)
0 meters 250
0 yards 250
Key to Symbols see back flap

graceful lines of the interior are due to the strong local stone used for construction, allowing pillars to be thinner and the whole structure lighter. The dark volcanic rock provides a foil for the jewel-like 12th–15th-century stained-glass windows, which are believed to be from the same workshop as Sainte-Chapelle's in Paris *(see p84)*.

The old section of Montferrand thrived from the 13th to the 17th centuries, and many fine houses – known as *hôtels particuliers* – built by prosperous merchants have survived. Some of the best of these, with Italianate loggias, mullioned windows, and intriguing courtyards, line ancient **rue Kléber**. Between Clermont and old Montferrand lies a third mini-city, the headquarters and factories of the Michelin rubber-and-tire company, founded here in 1830, which dominates the town.



Michelin man, c.1910

Choir inside the Cathédrale Notre-Dame-de-l'Assomption

Environs

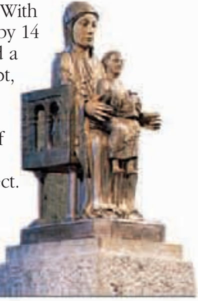
Once the rival of Clermont-Ferrand for supremacy in Auvergne, **Riom** is a somber provincial town of black stone houses and lava fountains. The 14th-century château of Duke Jean de Berry was razed in the 19th century to build the Palais de Justice; all that remains is the delicate Sainte-Chapelle with its lovely 15th-century stained-glass windows.

Riom's greatest treasure is a graceful Madonna holding an infant with a small bird in his hand. The statue is housed in the Eglise de Notre-Dame-du-Marthuret, originally built in the 14th century, but much rearranged since then.

Orcival ⓫

Puy de Dôme. 👥 *300.*
ℹ *Le Bourg (04 73 65 89 77).*

Crammed with hotels and crowded in summer, Orcival is nevertheless well worth visiting for its Romanesque church, the **Basilique d'Orcival**, which many would say is the best in the region. Completed at the beginning of the 12th century and typically Auvergne Romanesque in style, the apse is multitiered and the side walls are supported by powerful buttresses and strong arches. Inside, the ornate silver and vermilion *Virgin and Child* (in the formal, forward-facing position known as "in majesty") is enigmatic in its rigid, square chair. With an interior lit by 14 windows and a spacious crypt, the proportions of the building itself are the most graceful aspect.



***Virgin and Child* in the Basilique d'Orcival**

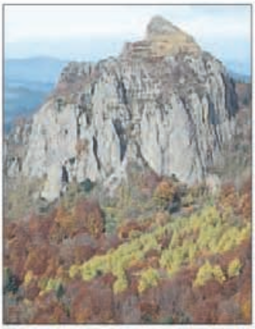
Aerial view of Puy de Dôme in the Monts Dômes range

Monts Dômes ⑫

Puy de Dôme. ✈ 🚉 🚌 *Clermont-Ferrand.* ℹ *Foot of Puy de Dôme (04 73 62 21 45: Apr–mid-Nov). Montlosier (04 73 65 64 00).* **www**.parc-volcans-auvergne.com

The youngest range of the Auvergne volcanoes at 4,000 years old, the Monts Dômes (or Chaîne des Puys), encompasses 112 extinct volcanoes aligned over a 19-mile (30-km) stretch just west of Clermont-Ferrand. At the center, the **Puy de Dôme** towers above a high plateau. A concentric road off the N922 spirals up the peak at a steady 12 percent gradient, while the steeper, original switchback Roman path is still used by hikers.

At the summit, half an hour farther, are the vestiges of the Roman temple of Mercury and a meteorological/telecommunications tower. On a rare clear day, the view across the volcano will take away whatever breath you have left.



The volcanic Roche Tuilière below Col de Guéry in the Monts Dore

The controversial new **Parc Européen du Volcanisme**, **Vulcania** uses the latest technology to simulate volcanic activity in its 5 acre (2 ha) underground circuit.

In the southwest corner of the Monts Dômes region is the **Château de Cordès**, a small, privately owned 15th-century manor house with formal gardens designed by Le Nôtre *(see p179)*.

Vulcania
D941B, Saint-Ours-les-Roches. ***Tel** 08 20 82 78 28.* ○ *mid-Mar–Aug: daily; Sep–mid-Nov: Wed–Sun.* 📷 ♿ 🍴 ☕ 🛍 ***Documentation center***
www.vulcania.com

Château de Cordès
Orcival. ***Tel** 04 73 65 81 34.*
○ *Easter–Oct: daily (need to reserve ahead by telephone).* 📷 ✋

Monts Dore ⑬

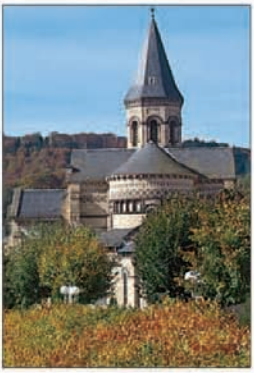
Puy de Dôme. ✈ *Clermont-Ferrand.* 🚉 🚌 *Le Mont-Dore.* ℹ *Montlosier, Aydat (04 73 65 64 00).*

Three giant volcanoes – the Puy de Sancy, the Banne d'Ordanche, and the Puy de l'Aiguiller – and their secondary cones make up the Monts Dore: dark green, heavily wooded mountains laced with rivers and lakes and dotted with summer and winter resorts for skiing, hiking, paragliding, canoeing and sailing.

The 6,185-ft (1,886-m) **Puy de Sancy** is the highest point in Central France. It can be reached by taking a shuttle from the town of Le Mont-Dore to the cable car which goes up to the peak, followed by a long hike across open terrain. From Le Mont-Dore, there is a scenic drive on the D36 which leads to the **Couze-Chambon valley**, a beautiful stretch of high moorland threaded with waterfalls.

The area has two popular spa towns, **La Bourboule**, for children's ailments, with its casino, and Le Mont-Dore, with its grandiose turn-of-the-century **Etablissement Thermal**.

Below the Col de Guéry on the D983, the eroded volcanic **Roche Sanadoire** and **Roche Tuilière** stand up like two huge gateposts. From their peaks are far-reaching views over the wooded Cirque de Chausse and beyond.



Church at La Bourboule in the Monts Dore

Uzerche ⑭

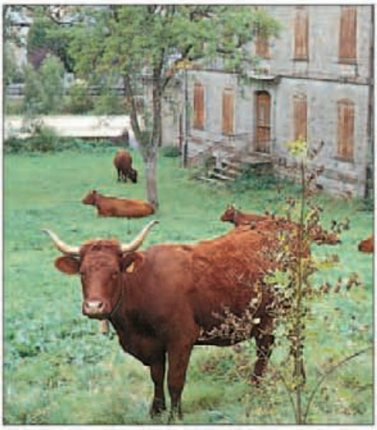
Corrèze. 👥 *3,000.* 🚉 🚌 ℹ *pl de la Libération (05 55 73 15 71).* ⛺ *20th of each month.*

Uzerche is an impressive sight: gray slate roofs, turrets, and belltowers rising from a hill above the Vézère river. This prosperous town never capitulated during the conflicts of the Middle Ages, and earlier withstood a seven-year siege by Moorish forces in 732: the townspeople sent a feast out to their enemy – in fact, the last of their supplies. The Moors, thinking such lavish offerings meant the city had stores to spare, gave up.

The Romanesque **Église St-Pierre** crests the hill above the town. Beyond Uzerche, the Vézère cuts through the green gorges of the Saillant.

CANTAL CHEESE

Transhumance is still practised in the Auvergne, with the local Salers cattle kept in barns in the valleys during winter and led up to mountain pastures for the summer. The robust grasses and flowers – gentian, myrtle, anemone – on which the cows graze produce a flavorful milk that is the basis for the region's great cheese, Cantal. Curds were once turned and pressed through cheesecloth by hand, but now modern methods prevail. Cantal is the key ingredient in *aligot* – the potato-and-cheese purée flavored with garlic that is one of the region's most famous dishes.



Salers cattle enjoying rich pastures

Turenne ⑮

Corrèze. 👥 *750.* 🚆 🚌 ℹ *le Bourg (05 55 85 94 38).*

Turenne is one of the most appealing medieval towns in the Corrèze. Crescent-shaped and clustered on the cliffside, the town was the last independent feudal fiefdom in France, under the absolute rule of the La Tour d'Auvergne family until 1738. Henri de la Tour d'Auvergne, their most illustrious member, was a marshal of France under Louis XIV, and one of the greatest soldiers of modern times.

Now the sole remains of the **Château de Turenne** are the 13th-century Clock Tower and 11th-century Tower of Caesar, from which there is a quite stunning 360-degree view of the Cantal mountains across to the Dordogne valley. Not far away is the 16th-century collegiate church and the **Chapelle des Capucins** dating from the 18th century.

⌂ Château de Turenne
Tel *05 55 85 90 66.* ○ *Apr–Oct: daily; Nov–Mar: Sun pm.* 🎫
www.chateau-turenne.com

Collonges-la-Rouge ⑯

Corrèze. 👥 *400.* 🚆 *Brive, then bus to Collonges.* ℹ *av de l'Auvitrie (05 55 25 32 25).*

There's something a little unsettling about Collonges' unique carmine sandstone architecture, quite beautiful in individual houses, though the overall effect is both austere and fairytale-like.

Founded in the 8th century, Collonges came under the rule of Turenne, whose burghers built the sturdy turreted houses in the surrounding vineyards. Look out for the communal bread oven in the marketplace, and the 11th-century church, later fortified with a tower keep. The church's unusual carved white limestone tympanum shows a man driving a bear and other lively figures.

Medieval Château de Val at Bort-les-Orgues near Salers

Salers ⑰

Cantal. 👥 *400.* 🚌 *summer only.* ℹ *pl Tyssandier d'Escous (04 71 40 70 68).* 🧺 *Wed.*

A solid, handsome town of gray lava houses and 15th-century ramparts, Salers sits atop a steep escarpment at the edge of the Cantal mountains. It is one of few virtually intact Renaissance villages in the region. The church has an admirable polychrome *mise au tombeau* (entombment), dated 1495, and five elaborate 17th-century Aubusson tapestries.

From the fountain, streets lead up to the cliff edge and allow views of the surrounding valleys, with the ever-present sound of cowbells in the distance. The town is very crowded in summer, but it makes a good starting point for excursions to the Puy Mary *(see p364)*, the huge barrage at Bort-les-Orgues, the nearby Château de Val, and the Cère valley to the south.

Puy Mary peak in the volcanic Monts du Cantal

Monts du Cantal ⑱

Cantal. ✈ *Aurillac.* 🚉 🚌 *Lioran.* ℹ *Aurillac (04 71 48 46 58).*

The Cantal mountains were originally one enormous volcano – the oldest and the largest in Europe, dating from the Tertiary period. The highest peaks, the **Plomb du Cantal** at 6,086 ft (1,855 m) and the **Puy Mary** at 5,863 ft (1,787 m), are surrounded by crests and deep river valleys. Driving the narrow roads is a thrill, compounded by the views at every hairpin turn. Between peaks and gorges, rich mountain pastures provide summer grazing for red-gold Salers cows *(see p363)*. From the **Pas de Peyrol**, the highest road pass in the country at 5,191 ft (1,589 m), it's about a 25-minute journey on foot to the summit of the Puy Mary.

Environs
One of the finest of the Auvergne châteaux, **Château d'Anjony** was built by Louis II d'Anjony, a supporter of Joan of Arc *(see pp300–1)*. Highlights are the 16th-century frescoes: in the chapel, scenes from the Life and Passion of Christ, and upstairs in the *Salle des Preux* (Knights' Room), a dazzling series of the nine heroes of chivalry. To the south lies the small town of **Aurillac**, a good base for exploring the Cantal region.

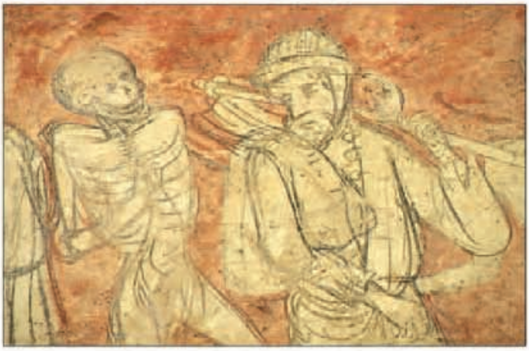
⌂ Château d'Anjony
Tournemire. ***Tel*** *04 71 47 61 67.*
🕐 *Jul–Aug: daily; mid-Feb–mid-Nov: daily pms.* ♿ 🗣 *obligatory.*

La Chaise-Dieu ⑲

Haute-Loire. 👥 *700.* 🚉 ℹ *pl de la Mairie (04 71 00 01 16).* ⛺ *Thu.*
www.la-chaise-dieu.info

Somber and massive, midway between Romanesque and Gothic, the 14th-century abbey church of **St-Robert** is the prime reason to visit the small village of La Chaise-Dieu. The building is an amalgam of styles; the choir, however, is sensational: 144 oak stalls carved with figures of Vice and Virtue. Above them, entirely covering the walls, are some of the loveliest tapestries in France. Made in Brussels and Arras in the early 16th century and depicting scenes from the Old and New Testaments, they are rich in color and detail.

On the outer walls of the choir the 15th-century wall painting of the *Danse Macabre* shows Death in the form of skeletons leading rich and poor alike to their inevitable end. Beyond the cloister is the Echo room, in which two people whispering in opposite corners can hear one another perfectly. A Baroque Music Festival from mid-August to September makes the abbey crowded.



Detail of *Danse Macabre* at St-Robert, in La Chaise-Dieu

Le Puy-en-Velay ⑳

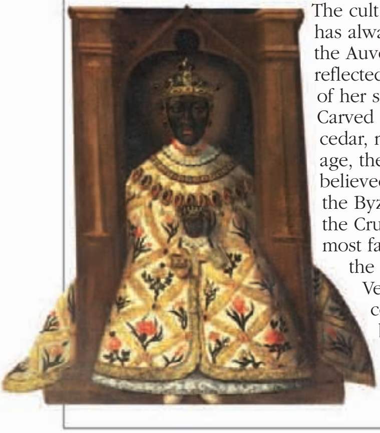
Haute-Loire. 👥 *20,500.* ✈ 🚉 🚌
ℹ *2 pl de Clauzel (04 71 09 38 41).*
⛺ *Sat.* 🎭 *Sep.*
www.ot-lepuyenvelay.fr

Located in the bowl of a volcanic cone, the town of Le Puy teeters on a series of rock outcrops and giant basalt pillars. The town has three peaks, each topped with a landmark church or statue. Seen from afar, this is one of the most impressive sights in France.

Now a commercial and tourist-oriented town, Le Puy's star attraction is its medieval **Holy City**. This became a pilgrimage center after the Bishop of Le Puy, Gotescalk, made one of the first pilgrimages to Santiago de Compostela in 962, and built the **Chapelle St-Michel d'Aiguilhe** on his return.

Statue of Notre-Dame-de-France at Le Puy

THE AUVERGNE'S BLACK MADONNAS



The cult of the Virgin Mary has always been strong in the Auvergne and this is reflected in the concentration of her statues in the region. Carved in dark walnut or cedar, now blackened with age, the Madonnas are believed to originate from the Byzantine influence of the Crusaders. Perhaps the most famous Madonna is the one in Le-Puy-en-Velay, a 17th-century copy of one which belonged to Louis IX in the Middle Ages.

Louis IX's Black Virgin

Pilgrims from eastern France and Germany assembled at the **Cathédrale de Notre-Dame** with its famous Black Madonna and "fever stone" – a Druid ceremonial stone with healing powers embedded in one of its walls – before setting off for Compostela.

Built on an early pagan site, the Cathédrale de Notre-Dame is a huge Romanesque structure. Multiform arches, carved palm and leaf designs, and a checkerboard façade show the influences of Moorish Spain, and indicate the considerable cultural exchange that took place with southern France in the 11th and 12th centuries. In the transept are Romanesque frescoes, notably an 11th–12th-century St. Michael; in the sacristy, the treasury includes the Bible of Theodolphus, a handwritten document from the era of Charlemagne. The cathedral is the center of the Holy City complex that dominates the upper town, encompassing a baptistry, cloister, Prior's house, and Penitents' chapel.

The colossal red statue of **Notre-Dame-de-France**, on the pinnacle of the Rocher Corneille, was erected in 1860, cast from 213 cannons captured at Sebastopol during the Crimean War. The statue is reached by a steep pathway and can be climbed by an iron ladder on the inside.

The Chapelle St-Michel, like the cathedral, shows Moorish influences in the trefoil decoration and colored mosaics on the rounded arch over the main entrance. It seems to grow out of a giant finger of lava rock and is reached by a steep climb. The church is thought to be located on the site of a Roman temple to Mercury, and its center dates from the 10th century, although most of the building was constructed a century later. The floor has been constructed to follow the contours of the rock in places, and the interior is ornamented with faded 10th-century murals and 20th-century stained-glass.

In the lower city, narrow streets of 15th- and 16th-century houses lead to the Vinay Garden and the **Musée Crozatier**, which has a collection of handmade lace from the 16th century to the present. The museum also has a good collection of medieval *objets d'art* and 15th-century paintings. Once begun, renovation work will close the museum for several years so call ahead.

In mid-September, Le Puy transforms itself into masked and costumed Renaissance carnival for the Bird King Festival, an ancient tradition celebrating the skill of the city's best archers *(see p38)*.

⛪ Chapelle St-Michel d'Aiguilhe

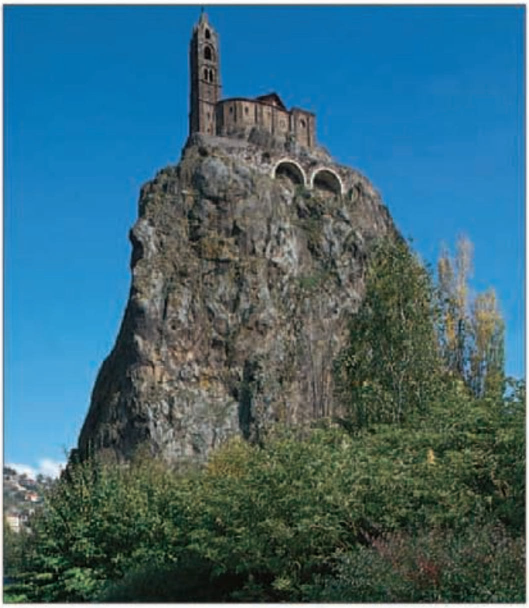
Aiguilhe. ***Tel*** *04 71 09 50 03.* ○ *mid-Mar–mid-Nov: daily; Christmas–mid-Mar: pms only.* ● *Jan 1, Dec 25.* 💰 ☞

🏠 Notre-Dame-de-France

Rocher Corneille. ***Tel*** *04 71 05 45 52.* ○ *daily.* ● *mid-Nov–Jan (except Christmas hols).* 💰 ☞

🏛 Musée Crozatier

Jardin Henri Vinay. ***Tel*** *04 71 06 62 40.* ● *for renovations until 2011.* 💰 📷



Chapelle St-Michel d'Aiguilhe, standing on a finger of lava rock

Ruins of the Castle of Calmont d'Olt at Espalion in the Lot Valley

Vallée du Lot ㉑

Aveyron. ✈ *Aurillac, Rodez.* 🚆 *Rodez, Séverac-le-Château.* 🚌 *Espalion, Rodez.* ℹ *Espalion (05 65 44 10 63).* **www**.valleedulot.com

From Mende and the old river port of La Canourgue all the way to Conques, the river Lot (or Olt in old usage) courses through its fertile valley past orchards, vineyards, and pine forests. **St Côme d'Olt**, near the Aubrac mountains, is an unspoiled, fortified village whose 15th-century church is surrounded by Medieval and Renaissance houses. At **Espalion**, the pastel stone houses and a turreted 16th-century castle are reflected in the river, which runs beneath a 13th-century arched stone bridge. The town has one of the best markets in the region on Friday mornings. Just outside town is the 11th-century Perse Church, whose carved capitals portray battling knights and imaginary birds sipping from a chalice.

Estaing was once the fiefdom of one of the greatest families of the Rouergue, dating back to the 13th-century. The village nestles beneath its massive château (open May–Sep) on the river bank. The road passes through the Lot Gorge on the way to **Entraygues** ("between waters") where the old quarter and 13th-century Gothic bridge are worth a visit. Beyond Entraygues the river widens to join the Garonne.

Conques ㉒

See pp368–9.

Rodez ㉓

Aveyron. 👥 *26,000.* ✈ 🚆 🚌 ℹ *pl Foch (05 65 75 76 77).* 🛒 *Wed, Fri & Sat.* **www**.ot-rodez.fr

Like many medieval French cities, Rodez was politically divided: the store-lined **place du Bourg** on one side of town and **place de la Cité** near the cathedral on the other, reflect conflicting secular and ecclesiastical interests. Rodez's commercial center, the largest in the region, is probably the main attraction now, though the 13th-century huge pink stone **Cathédrale Notre-Dame** is worth a look, with its fortress-like west façade, and its magnificent, ornate belltower. The 15th-century choir stalls show a superb panoply of creatures, including a winged lion and one naughty fellow exposing his derrière.

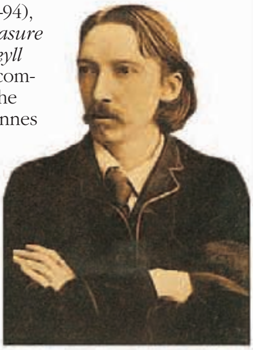
Environs

Southeast (28 miles/ 45 kms) lies Saint Léons, birthplace of Jean-Henri Fabre, the famous entymologist. Here is **Micropolis**, part interactive museum, part theme park, dedicated to the glory of insects (closed Nov–mid-Feb). Watch the breathtaking movie of the same name, if nothing else.

Entombment in Rodez Cathedral

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON

Robert Louis Stevenson (1850–94), best known for his novels *Treasure Island, Kidnapped*, and *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde,* was also an accomplished travel writer. In 1878, he set off across the remote Cévennes mountain range with only a small donkey, Modestine, for company. His classic account of this eventful journey, *Travels with a Donkey in the Cévennes*, was published in the following year.



Robert Louis Stevenson

Dramatic scenery in Corniche des Cévennes national park

Corniche des Cévennes ㉔

Lozère, Gard. ✈ *Nîmes.* 🚆 *Alès.*
🚌 *St-Jean-du-Gard.*
ℹ *St-Jean-du-Gard (04 66 85 32 11).*
www.cevennes-parcnational.fr

The dramatic Corniche road from Florac on the Tarn to St-Jean-du-Gard was cut in the early 18th century by the army of Louis XIV in pursuit of the Camisards, Protestant rebels who had no uniforms but fought in their ordinary shirts (*camiso* in the *langue d'oc*). The route of the D983 makes a spectacular drive. Fascination with the history of the Camisards was one of the reasons that Robert Louis Stevenson undertook his fabled trek in the Cévennes with Modestine, recounted in his *Travels with a Donkey*.

At St-Laurent-de-Trèves, where fossil remains suggest dinosaurs once roamed, there is a view of the Grands Causses and the peaks of Lozère and Aigoual. The Corniche ends in St-Jean-du-Gard, where the **Musée des Vallées Cévenoles**, depicting peasant life, is located in a former 17th-century inn.

🏛 Musée des Vallées Cévenoles

95 grand' rue, St-Jean-du-Gard.
Tel *04 66 85 10 48.* ○ *Jul–Aug: 10am–7pm daily; Apr–Jun, Sep–Oct: 10am–noon, 2–7pm daily; Nov–Mar Tue, Thu, Sun pm.* ● *Jan 1, Dec 25.*
♿ **www**.museedescevennes.com

Grands Causses ㉕

Aveyron. ✈ *Rodez-Marcillac.* 🚆
🚌 *Millau.* ℹ *Millau (05 65 60 02 42).*
🛒 *Wed & Fri.* **www**.ot-millau.fr

The Causses are vast, arid limestone plateaus, alternating with surprisingly green, fertile canyon valleys. The only sign of life at times is a bird of prey wheeling in the sky, or an isolated stone farm or shepherd's hut. The whole area makes for some desolate hiking for those who like solitude.

The four Grands Causses – Sauveterre, Méjean, Noir, and Larzac – stretch out east of the city of Millau, which boasts the tallest vehicular bridge in the world. They extend from Mende in the north to the valley of the Vis river in the south.

Among the sights in the Causses are the *chaos* – bizarre rock formations reputed to resemble ruined cities, and named accordingly: there's the chaos of **Montpellier-le-Vieux**, **Nîmes-le-Vieux**, and **Roquesaltes**. **Aven Armand** and the **Dargilan Grotto** are vast and deep natural underground grottoes.

A good place to head for in the Larzac Causse is the strange, rough-hewn stone village of **La Couvertoirade**, a fully-enclosed citadel of the Knights Templar in the 12th century. The unpaved streets and medieval houses are an austere reminder of the dark side of the Middle Ages. Entry to the village is free, with a fee for the tour of the ramparts.

The Causse du Larzac's best-known village is probably **Roquefort-sur-Soulzon**, a small gray town terraced on the side of a crumbled limestone outcrop. It has one main street and one major product, Roquefort cheese. This is made from unpasteurized sheep's milk, seeded with a distinctive blue mould grown on loaves of bread, and aged in the warren of damp caves above the town.

View over Méjean, one of the four plateaux of the Grands Causses

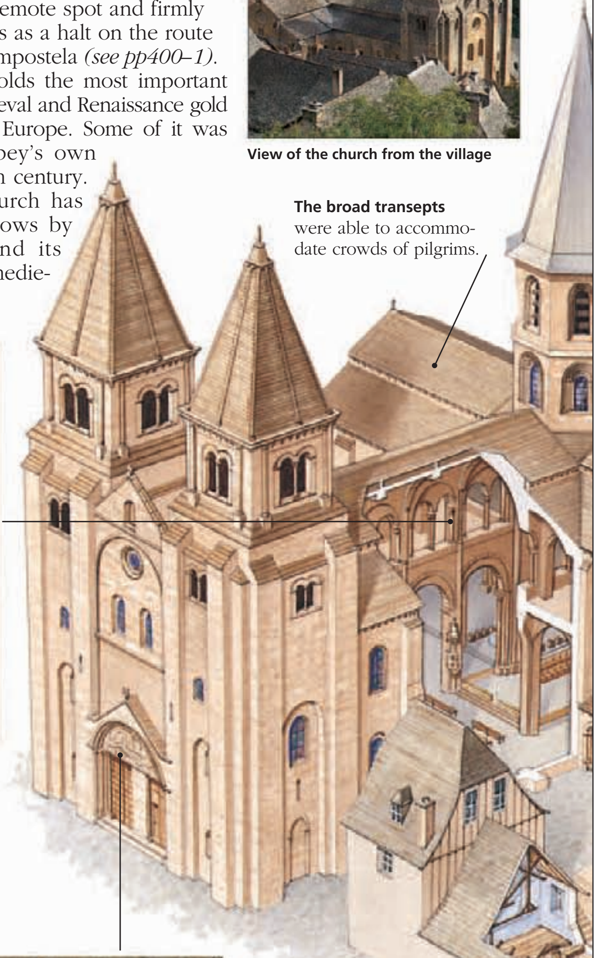
Conques ㉒

12th-century reliquary

The village of Conques clusters around the splendid Abbaye de Ste-Foy, hemmed into a rugged site against the hillside. Sainte-Foy was a young girl who became an early Christian martyr; her relics were first kept at a rival monastery in Agen. In the 9th century a monk from Conques stole the relics, thereby attracting pilgrims to this remote spot and firmly establishing Conques as a halt on the route to Santiago de Compostela *(see pp400–1)*.

The treasury holds the most important collection of medieval and Renaissance gold work in western Europe. Some of it was made in the abbey's own workshops as early as the 9th century. The Romanesque abbey church has beautiful stained-glass windows by Pierre Soulages (1994), and its tympanum is a triumph of medieval sculpture.

View of the church from the village



The broad transepts were able to accommodate crowds of pilgrims.

Nave Interior

Pure and elegantly austere, the Romanesque interior dates from 1050–1135. The short nave soars to a height of 72 ft (22 m), with three tiers of arches topped by 250 decorative carved capitals.

Tympanum

This sculpture from the early 12th century depicts the Last Judgment*, with the Devil in Hell (shown) in the lower part of the sculpture and Christ in Heaven in the tympanum's central position.*

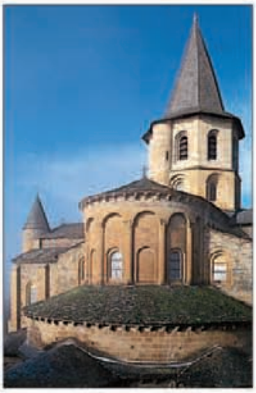
CONQUES' TREASURES

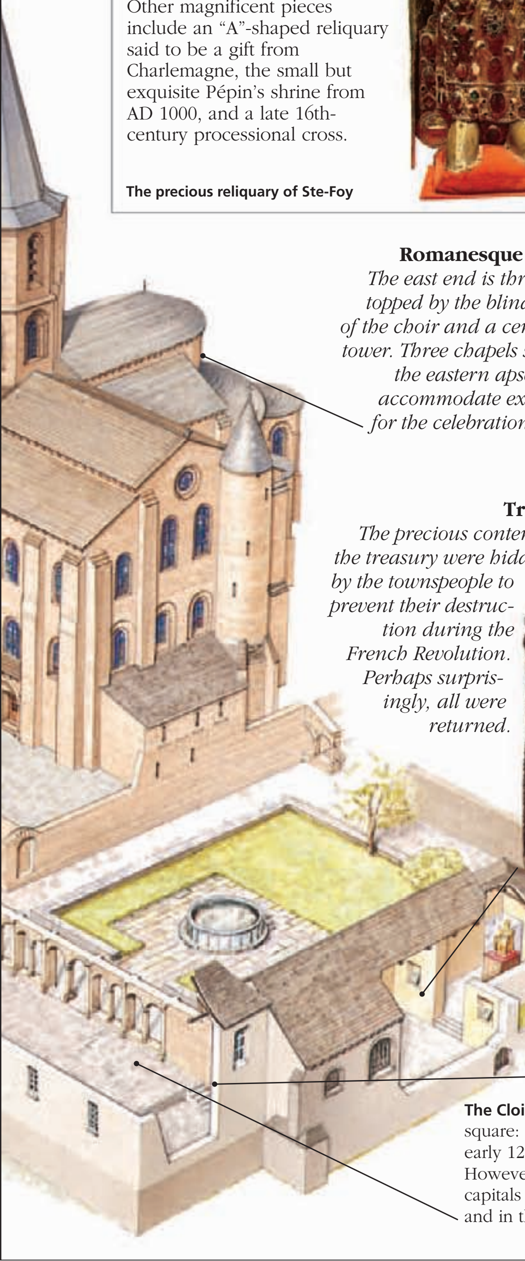
The treasures date from the 9th to the 19th century, and are prized for both their beauty and their rarity. The gold-plated wood and silver reliquary of Ste-Foy is studded with gems, rock crystal, and even an *intaglio* of Roman Emperor Caracalla. The body is 9th century, but the face may be older, possibly 5th century. Other magnificent pieces include an "A"-shaped reliquary said to be a gift from Charlemagne, the small but exquisite Pépin's shrine from AD 1000, and a late 16th-century processional cross.

The precious reliquary of Ste-Foy

VISITORS' CHECKLIST

Aveyron. 👥 *1,600.* ℹ *Pl de l'Eglise (0820 820 803).* 🚆 🚌 *from Rodez.* **Treasury/museum** ○ *daily: Apr–Sep: 9:30am–12:30pm, 2–6:30pm; Oct–Mar: 10am–noon, 2–6pm.* ✝ *8am (Sep– Jun), 11am Mon–Sat (Jul– Aug), 7:45am, 11am Sun.* 📷 ♿ *restr.* **www**.conques.fr





Romanesque Chapels

The east end is three-tiered, topped by the blind arcades of the choir and a central bell-tower. Three chapels surround the eastern apse, built to accommodate extra altars for the celebration of mass.

Treasury

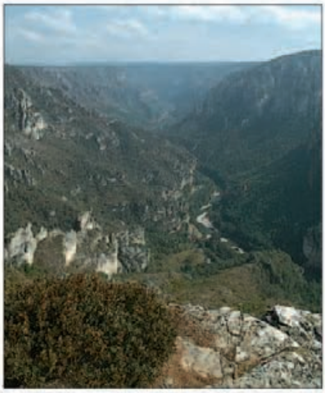
The precious contents of the treasury were hidden by the townspeople to prevent their destruction during the French Revolution. Perhaps surprisingly, all were returned.

Entrance to Treasury

The Cloister consists of a reconstructed square: only two sections of the original early 12th-century arcades remain. However, 30 of the original carved capitals are displayed in the refectory and in the Musée Fau.

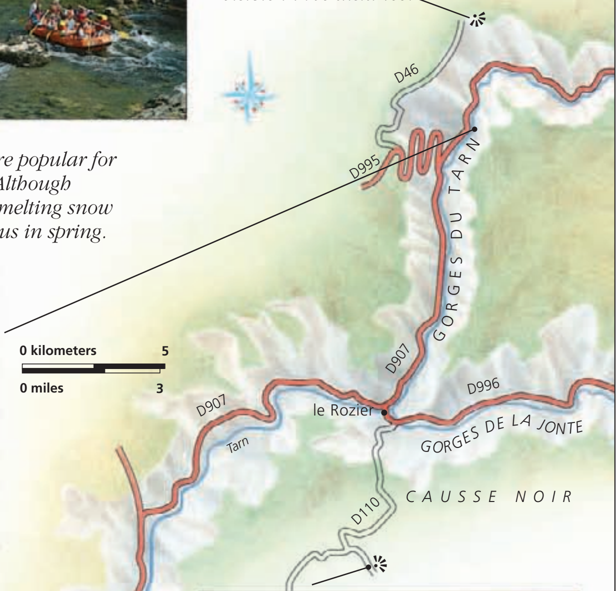
Gorges du Tarn ㉖

Near the beginning of its journey to meet the river Garonne, the Tarn flows through some of Europe's most spectacular gorges. For millions of years, the Tarn and its tributary the Jonte have eaten their way down through the limestone plateaus of the Cévennes, creating a sinuous forked canyon some 15 miles (25 km) long and nearly 1,300 ft (400 m) deep. The gorges are flanked by rocky bluffs and scaled by roads with dizzying bends and panoramic views, which are incredibly popular in the high season. The surrounding plateaus, or *causses*, are eerily different, forming an open, austere landscape, dry in summer and snow-clad in winter, where wandering sheep and isolated farms are sometimes the only signs of life.

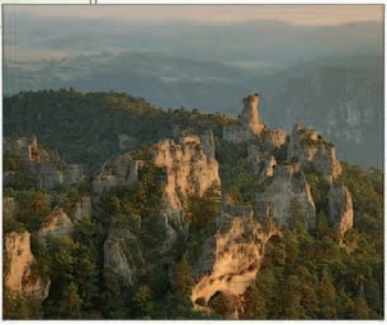


Point Sublime
From 2,600 ft (800 m) up, there are stunning views of a major bend in the Tarn gorge, with the Causse Méjean visible in the distance.

Outdoor Activities
The Tarn and Jonte gorges are popular for canoeing and river-rafting. Although relatively placid in summer, melting snow can make the rivers hazardous in spring.



Pas de Souci
Just upriver from Les Vignes, Pas de Souci flanks a narrow point in the gorge as the Tarn makes its way northwards.



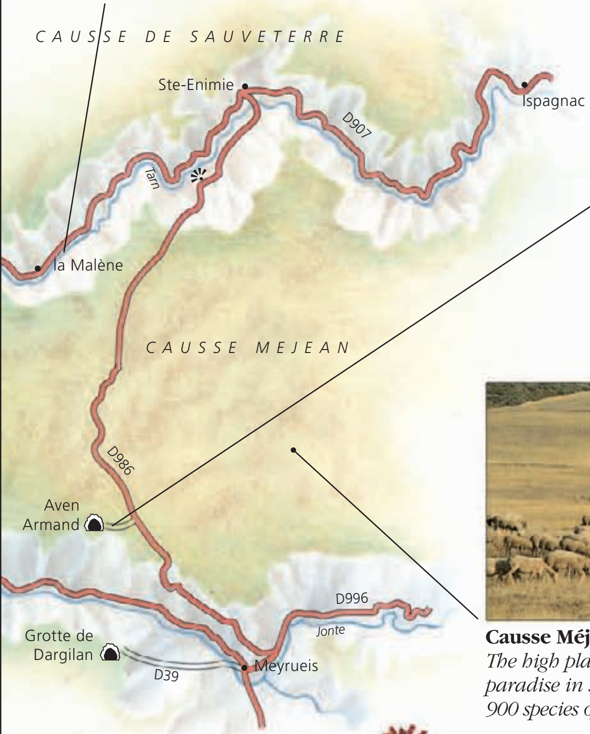
Chaos de Montpellier-le-Vieux
Situated on the flank of the Causse Noir off the D110 is a remarkable geological site – bizarre rock formations created by limestone erosion.

La Malène
An old crossing-point between the Causse de Sauveterre and the Causse Méjean, this village, with its 16th-century fortified manor, is a good starting point for boat trips.

VISITORS' CHECKLIST

Lozère. ✈ *Rodez-Marcillac.* 🚆 *Mende, Banassac, Séverac-le-Château.* 🚌 *Milau.* ℹ *Le Rozier (05 65 62 60 89). St-Enimie (04 66 48 53 44).* **www**.ot-gorgesdutarn.com

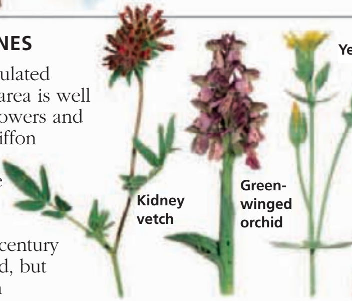
Aven Armand Caves
On the Causse Méjean, many stalactites in the caves are tinted by minerals that are deposited by the slowly trickling water.


CAUSSE DE SAUVETERRE
Ste-Enimie
Ispagnac
D907
Tarn
la Malène
CAUSSE MEJEAN
D986
Aven Armand
D996
Jonte
Grotte de Dargilan
D39
Meyrueis

Causse Méjean
The high plateaus or causses *are a botanist's paradise in spring and summer, with over 900 species of wild flowers, including orchids.*

THE WILD CEVENNES

One of the least populated parts of France, this area is well known for its wild flowers and birds of prey, and griffon vultures were once common here. These giant but harmless scavengers nearly died out in the 20th century through being hunted, but now a reintroduction program has led to growing numbers breeding in the Gorges de la Jonte.


Yellow wort
Kidney vetch
Green-winged orchid

Wild flowers *found in this thinly populated area include unusual alpine plants.*

The griffon vulture, *which now breeds in the region, has a wingspan of over 8 ft (2.5 m).*

RESTAURANT

THE RHÔNE VALLEY AND FRENCH ALPS

LOIRE · RHÔNE · AIN · ISÈZÈRE · DRÔME
ARDÈCHE · HAUTE-SAVOIE · SAVOIE · HAUTES-ALPES

Its two most important geographical features, the Alps and the river Rhône, give this region both its name and its dramatic character. The east is dominated by majestic snowcapped peaks, while the Rhône provides a vital conduit between north and south.

The Romans recognized this strategic route when they founded Lyon over 2,000 years ago. Today Lyon, with its great museums and fine Renaissance buildings, is the second city of France. It is one of the country's most vital commercial and cultural centers as well as the undisputed capital of French gastronomy. To the north lie the flat marshlands of the Dombes and the rich agricultural Bresse plain. Here, too, are the famous Beaujolais vineyards which, along with the Rhône vineyards, make the region such an important wine producer.

The French Alps are among the most popular year-round resort areas in the world, with internationally renowned ski stations such as Chamonix, Mégève, and Courchevel, and historic cities like Chambéry, capital of Savoy before it joined France. Elegant spa towns line the shores of Lac Léman (Lake Geneva). Grenoble, a bustling university city and hi-tech center, is flanked by two of the most spectacular nature reserves in France, the Chartreuse and the Vercors.

To the south, orchards and fields of sunflowers give way to brilliant rows of lavender interspersed with vineyards and olive groves. Châteaux and ancient towns dot the landscape. Mountains and pretty, old-fashioned spa towns characterize the rugged Ardèche, and the deeply scoured gorges along the river Ardèche offer some of the wildest scenery in France.

The restored Ferme de la Forêt at St-Trivier-de-Courtes, north of Bourg-en-Bresse

◁ **Annecy's medieval quarter**

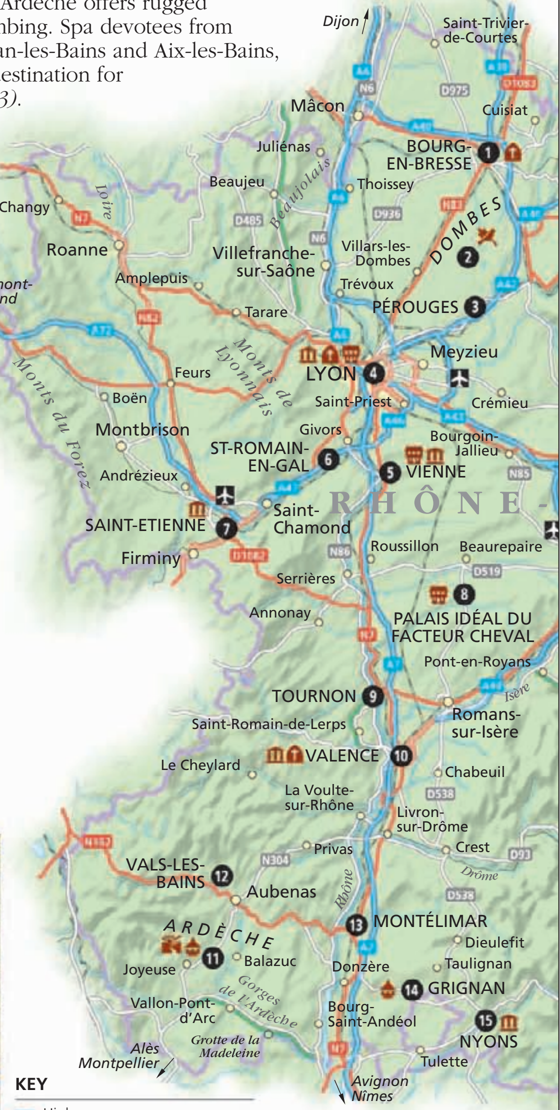
Exploring the Rhône Valley and French Alps

Lyon is the region's largest city, famed for its historic buildings and gastronomic tradition. Wine lovers can choose between the vineyards of the Beaujolais, Rhône Valley, and Drôme region to the south. To the west, the Ardèche offers rugged wilderness, canoeing, and climbing. Spa devotees from around the world flock to Évian-les-Bains and Aix-les-Bains, while the Alps are a favorite destination for sports enthusiasts *(see pp322–3)*.

SIGHTS AT A GLANCE

- Aix-les-Bains ㉒
- Annecy ㉓
- The Ardèche ⑪
- Bourg-en-Bresse ①
- Briançon ⑯
- Chambéry ㉑
- The Chartreuse ⑳
- The Dombes ②
- Grenoble ⑱
- Grignan ⑭
- Lac Léman ㉔
- Le Bourg d'Oisans ⑰
- Lyon ④
- Montélimar ⑬
- Nyons ⑮
- Palais Idéal du Facteur Cheval ⑧
- Pérouges ③
- St-Étienne ⑦
- St-Romain-en-Gal ⑥
- Tournon-sur-Rhône ⑨
- Valence ⑩
- Vals-les-Bains ⑫
- The Vercors ⑲
- Vienne ⑤

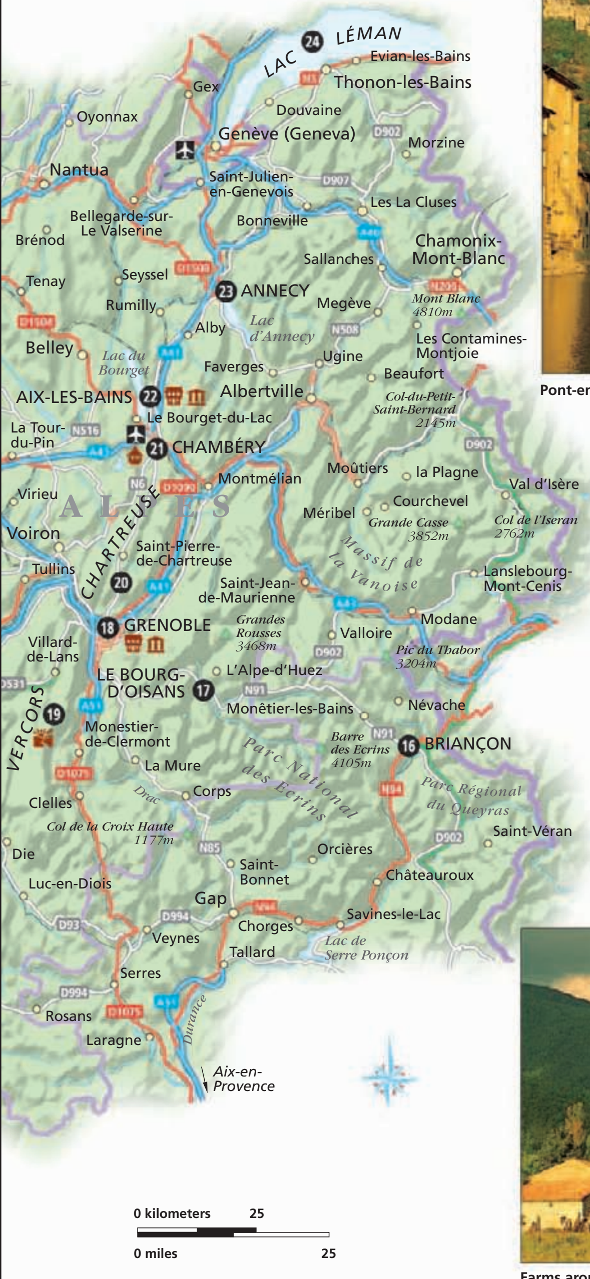
The Pont des Amours in Annecy


Dijon
Saint-Trivier-de-Courtes
Mâcon
Cuisiat
Juliénas
BOURG-EN-BRESSE ①
Beaujeu
Beaujolais
Thoissey
Changy
Loire
Roanne
DOMBES
②
Villefranche-sur-Saône
Villars-les-Dombes
Amplepuis
Trévoux
Clermont-Ferrand
Tarare
PÉROUGES ③
Monts de Lyonnais
Meyzieu
Monts du Forez
Feurs
LYON ④
Boën
Saint-Priest
Crémieu
Montbrison
Givors
ST-ROMAIN-EN-GAL ⑥
Bourgoin-Jallieu
Andrézieux
⑤ VIENNE
RHÔNE
Saint-Chamond
SAINT-ETIENNE ⑦
Roussillon
Beaurepaire
Firminy
Serrières
⑧
Annonay
PALAIS IDÉAL DU FACTEUR CHEVAL
Pont-en-Royans
TOURNON ⑨
Isère
Romans-sur-Isère
Saint-Romain-de-Lerps
VALENCE ⑩
Le Cheylard
Chabeuil
La Voulte-sur-Rhône
Livron-sur-Drôme
Privas
Crest
VALS-LES-BAINS ⑫
Drôme
Aubenas
Rhône
⑬ MONTÉLIMAR
ARDÈCHE
Dieulefit
⑪
Balazuc
Joyeuse
Donzère
Taulignan
⑭ GRIGNAN
Gorges de l'Ardèche
Vallon-Pont-d'Arc
Bourg-Saint-Andéol
⑮ NYONS
Alès
Montpellier
Grotte de la Madeleine
Tulette
Avignon
Nîmes
A6
N6
A40
D975
A39
D1083
N7
H83
D936
A42
D485
N6
N82
A72
A46
A43
N85
A47
D1082
N86
D519
N7
A7
N102
N304
D538
D93
D538
A7
N7

KEY

- ▬ Highway
- ▬ Major road
- ▬ Secondary road
- ▬ Minor road
- ▬ Scenic route
- ▬ Main railroad
- — Minor railroad
- ▬ International border
- ▬ Regional border
- ▲ Summit

For additional map symbols *see back flap*


LAC LÉMAN
24
Evian-les-Bains
Thonon-les-Bains
N5
Gex
Douvaine
Oyonnax
Genève (Geneva)
D902
Morzine
Nantua
Saint-Julien-en-Genevois
D907
Les La Cluses
Bellegarde-sur-Le Valserine
Bonneville
A40
Brénod
Chamonix-Mont-Blanc
Sallanches
Tenay
Seyssel
D1508
23 ANNECY
N205
Mont Blanc 4810m
Megève
Rumilly
Lac d'Annecy
D1504
Alby
N508
Les Contamines-Montjoie
Belley
Lac du Bourget
A41
Ugine
Faverges
Beaufort
AIX-LES-BAINS 22
Albertville
Col-du-Petit-Saint-Bernard 2145m
La Tour-du-Pin
N516
Le Bourget-du-Lac
D902
A43
21 CHAMBÉRY
Moûtiers
la Plagne
N6
D1090
Montmélian
Val d'Isère
Virieu
ALPES
Courchevel
Méribel
Grande Casse 3852m
Col de l'Iseran 2762m
CHARTREUSE
Voiron
Saint-Pierre-de-Chartreuse
Massif de la Vanoise
Tullins
20
Saint-Jean-de-Maurienne
Lanslebourg-Mont-Cenis
A43
A41
Modane
18 GRENOBLE
Grandes Rousses 3468m
Valloire
Villard-de-Lans
D902
Pic du Thabor 3204m
LE BOURG-D'OISANS 17
L'Alpe-d'Huez
D531
N91
VERCORS
19
A51
Monêtier-les-Bains
Névache
Monestier-de-Clermont
Barre des Ecrins 4105m
N91
16 BRIANÇON
Parc National des Ecrins
La Mure
D1075
N94
Parc Régional du Queyras
Drac
Corps
Clelles
Col de la Croix Haute 1177m
D902
Saint-Véran
Die
N85
Orcières
Saint-Bonnet
Luc-en-Diois
Châteauroux
Gap
D994
N94
D93
Savines-le-Lac
Chorges
Veynes
Tallard
Lac de Serre Ponçon
Serres
D994
A51
Rosans
D1075
Durance
Laragne
Aix-en-Provence
0 kilometers 25
0 miles 25

Pont-en-Royans in the Vercors

GETTING AROUND

Lyon and Geneva are the main transit hubs of the region. For Lyon, change from Eurostar to TGV at Lille. Apart from the Alpine regions, local train and bus services tend to be slow and inconvenient. A car is essential if you wish to get off the most heavily traveled autoroutes – the most important ones being the A7, linking Lyon with Valence and the south; and the A40 and A43/A41, which run east to the Alps. The three international airports nearest the Alps are Geneva-Cointrin in Switzerland, St-Exupéry near Lyon, and Grenoble Isère. Note that high Alpine passes can be closed between November and June.

Farms around Le Poët Laval, near Montélimar

Bourg-en-Bresse ❶

Ain. 👥 *43,000.* 🚆 🚌 ℹ *Centre Culturel Albert Camus, 6 av Alsace-Lorraine (04 74 22 49 40).* ⛺ *Wed & Sat.* **www**.bourg-en-bresse.org

Bourg-en-Bresse is a busy market town, with some beautifully restored half-timbered buildings. It is best known for its tasty *poulet de Bresse* (chickens raised in the flat agricultural region of Bresse and designated *appellation contrôlée, see p319*); and its abbey church of **Brou** on the southeast edge of town.

The latter, no longer a place of worship, has become one of the most visited sites in France. Flamboyant Gothic in style, it was built between 1505 and 1536 by Margaret of Austria after the death of her husband Philibert, Duke of Savoy, in 1504.

The couple's finely sculpted Carrara marble tombs can be seen in the choir, along with the tomb of Margaret of Bourbon, Philibert's mother, who died in 1483. Notice also the beautifully carved choir stalls, stained-glass windows, and rood screen with its elegant basket-handle arching.

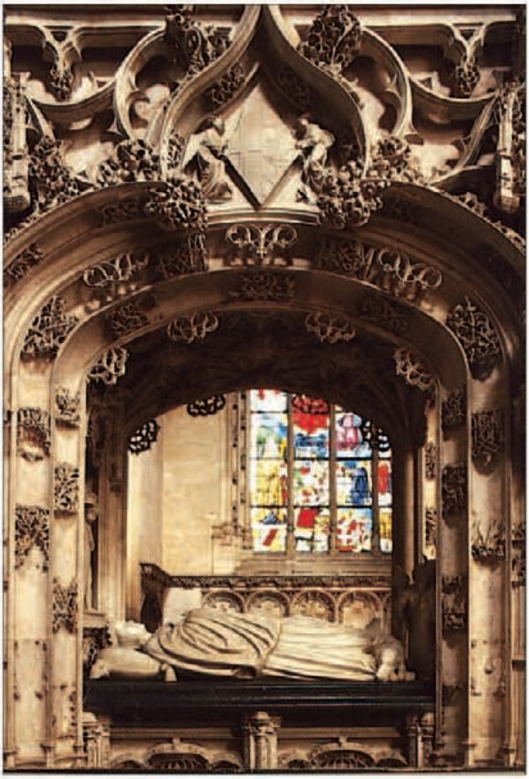
The adjacent cloisters house a small museum with a good collection of 16th- and 17th-century Dutch and Flemish masters, as well as contemporary works by local artists.

Environs

About 15 miles (24 km) north of Bourg-en-Bresse at St-Trivier-de-Courtes, the restored **Ferme-Musée de la Forêt** offers a look at farm life in the region during the 17th century. The ancient house has what is known locally as a Saracen chimney, with a brick hood in the center of the room, similar to constructions in Sicily and Portugal, and a collection of antique farm implements.

Bresse chickens

🏛 **Ferme-Musée de la Forêt**
Tel *04 74 30 71 89.* ○ *Jul–Sep: daily; Apr–Jun & Oct: w/e & public hols.* ● *Mon am.* € ♿



Tomb of Margaret of Austria in the abbey church of Brou at Bourg-en-Bresse

The Dombes ❷

Ain. ✈ *Lyon.* 🚆 *Lyon, Villars les Dombes, Bourg-en-Bresse.* 🚌 *Villars-les-Dombes (from Bourg-en-Bresse).* ℹ *3 pl de Hôtel de Ville, Villars-les-Dombes (04 74 98 06 29).*

This flat, glacier-gouged plateau south of Bourg-en-Bresse is dotted with small hills, ponds and marshes, making it popular with anglers and bird-watchers.

In the middle of the area at **Villars-les-Dombes** is an ornithological park, the **Parc des Oiseaux**. Over 400 species of native and exotic birds live here, including tufted herons, vultures, pink flamingoes, emus, and ostriches.

🐦 **Parc des Oiseaux**
Route Nationale 83, Villars-les-Dombes. ***Tel*** *04 74 98 05 54.*
○ *daily.* ● *Dec–Feb.* € ♿

Pérouges ❸

Ain. 👥 *900.* 🚆 *Meximieux-Pérouges.* 🚌 ℹ *04 74 46 70 84.* **www**.perouges.org

Originally the home of immigrants from Perugia, Pérouges is a fortified hilltop village of medieval houses and cobblestoned streets. In the 13th century it was a center of linen-weaving, but with the mechanization of the industry in the 19th century, the local population fell from 1,500 to 90.

Restoration of its historic buildings and a new influx of craftsmen have breathed new life into Pérouges. Not surprisingly, the village has often been used as the setting for historical dramas such as *The Three Musketeers and Monsieur Vincent*. The village's main square, place de la Halle, is shaded by a huge lime tree planted in 1792 to honor the Revolution.

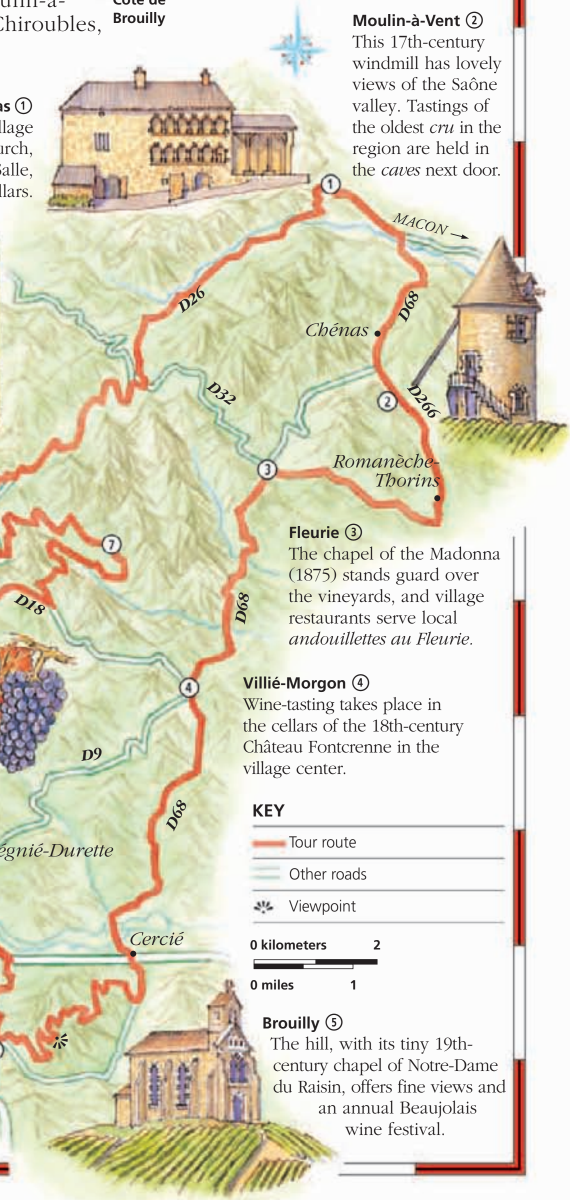
A Tour of Beaujolais

Beaujolais is an ideal area for wine tasting, offering delicious, affordable wine and glorious countryside. The south of the region produces most of the Beaujolais Nouveau, released fresh from the cellars on the third Thursday of November each year. In the north are the ten superior quality *cru* wines – St-Amour, Juliénas, Moulin-à-Vent, Chénas, Fleurie, Chiroubles, Morgon, Brouilly, Côte de Brouilly, and Regnié – most of which can be visited in a day's drive. The distinctive *maisons du pays* have living quarters built over the wine cellar. Almost every village has its *cave* (wine cellar), offering tastings and a glimpse of the wine culture that dominates local life.

Côte de Brouilly

Juliénas ①
Famous for *coq au vin*, this village stores and sells wine in its church, at the Château du Bois de la Salle, and at several private cellars.

Moulin-à-Vent ②
This 17th-century windmill has lovely views of the Saône valley. Tastings of the oldest *cru* in the region are held in the *caves* next door.



Vineyard of Gamay grapes

Chiroubles ⑦
A bust in the village square honors Victor Pulliat, who saved the vines from the phylloxera blight in the 1880s by using American vine stocks.

Fleurie ③
The chapel of the Madonna (1875) stands guard over the vineyards, and village restaurants serve local *andouillettes au Fleurie.*

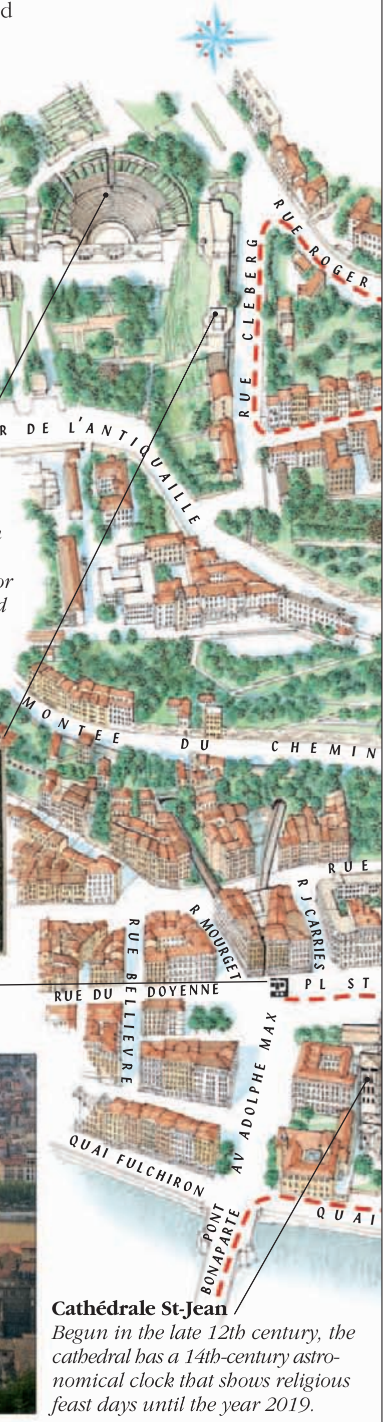
Villié-Morgon ④
Wine-tasting takes place in the cellars of the 18th-century Château Fontcrenne in the village center.

Beaujeu ⑥
Once the ancient capital of the region, Beaujeu offers tastings in its 17th-century hospices. This Renaissance wooden building houses a store, information center, and museum.

Brouilly ⑤
The hill, with its tiny 19th-century chapel of Notre-Dame du Raisin, offers fine views and an annual Beaujolais wine festival.

Street-by-Street: Lyon ④

On the west bank of the river Saône, the restored old quarter of Vieux Lyon is an atmospheric warren of cobbled streets, *traboules* (covered passageways), Renaissance palaces, first-class restaurants, lively *bouchons* (bistros), and bohemian stores. It is also the site of the Roman city of Lugdunum, the commercial and military capital of Gaul founded by Julius Caesar in 44 BC. Vestiges of this prosperous city can be seen in the superb Gallo-Roman museum at the top of Fourvière hill. Two excavated Roman theaters still stage performances from opera to rock concerts. At the foot of the hill is the finest collection of Renaissance mansions in France. The spectacular Musée des Confluences makes an exciting new addition to the city in 2009.



★ Théâtres Romains
There are two Roman amphitheaters here: the Grand Théâtre, the oldest theater in France, built in 15 BC to seat 30,000 spectators and still used for modern performances; and the smaller Odéon, with its geometric tiled flooring.

★ Musée de la Civilisation Gallo-Romaine
This underground museum contains a rich collection of statues, mosaics, coins, and inscriptions evoking Lyon's Roman past.

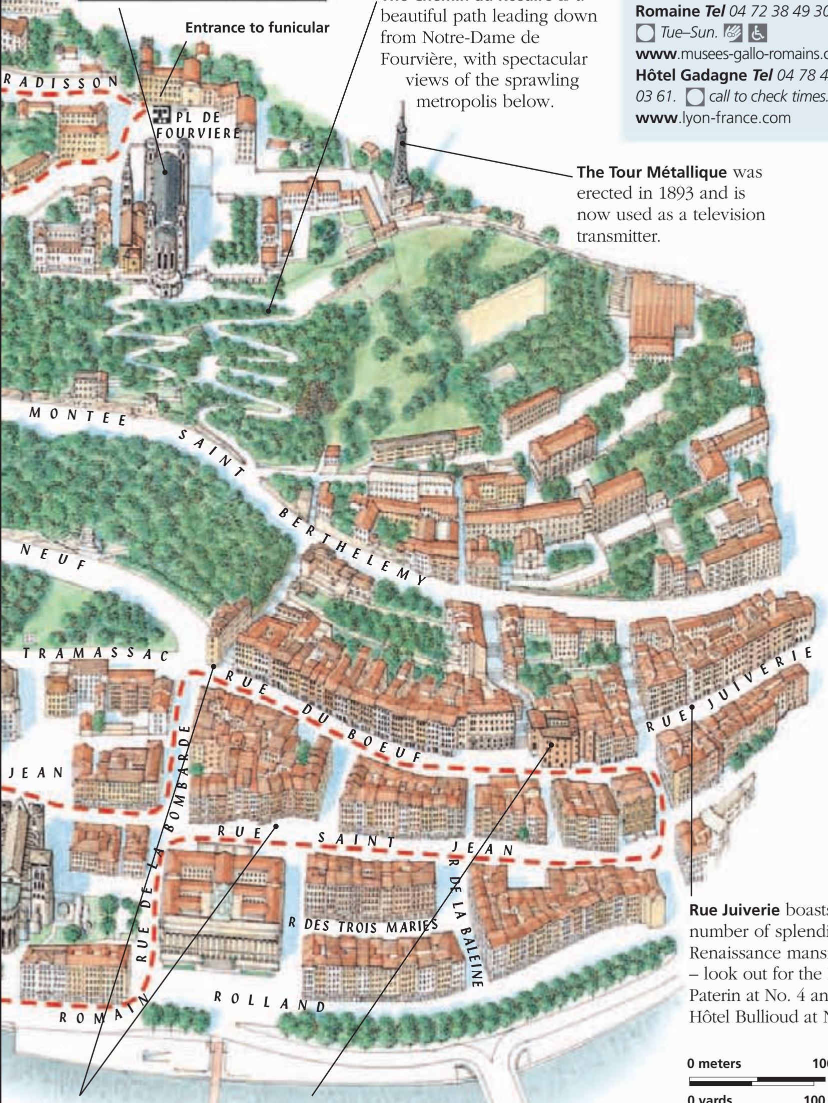
Entrance to funicular

STAR SIGHTS

- ★ Théâtres Romains
- ★ Musée de la Civilisation Gallo-Romaine
- ★ Basilique Notre-Dame de Fourvière

Cathédrale St-Jean
Begun in the late 12th century, the cathedral has a 14th-century astronomical clock that shows religious feast days until the year 2019.

★ Basilique Notre-Dame de Fourvière
This gaudy mock-Byzantine creation – a riot of turrets and crenelations, marble and mosaic – was built in the late 19th century and has become one of the symbols of Lyon.


RADISSON
PL DE FOURVIERE
MONTEE SAINT BERTHELEMY
NEUF
TRAMASSAC
JEAN
RUE DU BOEUF
RUE DE LA BOMBARDE
RUE SAINT JEAN
R DE LA BALEINE
R DES TROIS MARIES
ROMAIN
ROLLAND
RUE JUIVERIE

Entrance to funicular

The Chemin du Rosaire is a beautiful path leading down from Notre-Dame de Fourvière, with spectacular views of the sprawling metropolis below.

The Tour Métallique was erected in 1893 and is now used as a television transmitter.

Rue Juiverie boasts a number of splendid Renaissance mansions – look out for the Hôtel Paterin at No. 4 and the Hôtel Bullioud at No. 8.

Rue St-Jean and rue du Boeuf are lined with Renaissance mansions, the former homes of bankers and silk merchants.

The 15th-century Hôtel Gadagne houses two museums: the **Musée Historique de Lyon** and the charming **Musée de la Marionnette**, which exhibits the famous Lyonnais puppets.

0 meters 100

0 yards 100

VISITORS' CHECKLIST

Rhône. 👥 453,000. ✈ 16 miles (25 km) E Lyon. 🚆 Perrache, Part-Dieu (SNCF ℹ 3635). 🚌 Perrache (SNCF ℹ 3635). ℹ pl Bellecour (04 72 77 69 69). ⛱ daily. 🎪 Biennale Internationale d'Art Contemporain (Sep–Jan), Biennale Internationale de la Danse (Sep).

Musée de la Civilisation Gallo-Romaine ***Tel*** *04 72 38 49 30. ○ Tue–Sun. 🎫 ♿*
www.musees-gallo-romains.com

Hôtel Gadagne ***Tel*** *04 78 42 03 61. ○ call to check times. 🎫*
www.lyon-france.com

KEY

- - - Suggested route

Exploring Lyon

France's second city, dramatically sited on the banks of the Rhône and Saône rivers, has been a vital gateway between the north and south since ancient times. On arriving you immediately feel a *brin du sud*, or touch of the south. The crowds are not as quick-stepping as they are in Paris, and the sun is often shining here when it's rainy and cold in the north. Despite its importance as a banking, textile, and pharmaceutical center, most of the French immediately associate Lyon with their palates. The city is packed with restaurants, ranging from simple *bouchons* (bistros) to some of the most opulent tables in France.

The rue St-Jean in Vieux Lyon

The Presqu'île

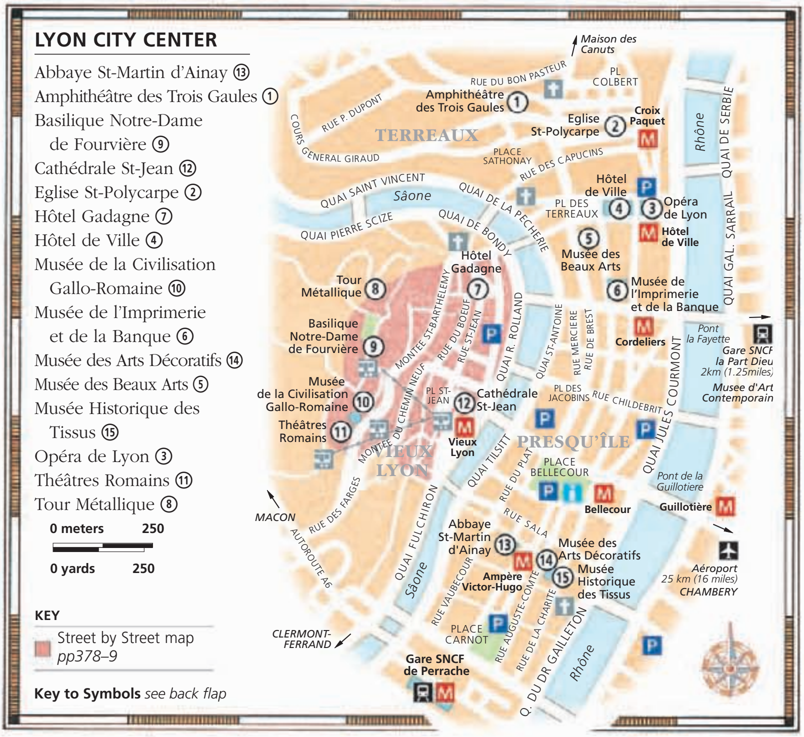
The heart of Lyon is the Presqu'île, the narrow peninsula of land between the Saône and Rhône rivers, just north of their confluence. A pedestrianized shopping street, the rue de la République, links the twin poles of civic life: the vast **place Bellecour**, with its equestrian statue of Louis XIV in the middle, and the **place des Terreaux**. The latter is overlooked by Lyon's ornate 17th-century Hôtel de Ville (town hall) and the Palais St-Pierre, a former Benedictine convent and now the home of the **Musée des Beaux Arts**. In the middle of the square is a monumental 19th-century fountain by Bartholdi, sculptor of the Statue of Liberty.

Behind the town hall, architect Jean Nouvel's futuristic **Opéra de Lyon** – a black barrel vault of steel and glass encased in a Neoclassical shell – was remodeled in a controversial design in 1993.

A few blocks to the south, the **Musée de l'Imprimerie** illustrates Lyon's contribution to the early days of printing in the late 15th century.

Two other museums worth visiting in the Presqu'île are the **Musée des Tissus**, which houses an extraordinary collection of silks and tapestries dating from early Christian times to the present day, and the **Musée des Arts Décoratifs**, which displays a range of tapestries, furniture, porcelain, and *objets d'art*.

Nearby, the **Abbaye St-Martin d'Ainay** is an impressively restored Carolingian church dating from 1107.



LYON CITY CENTER

Abbaye St-Martin d'Ainay	⑬
Amphithéâtre des Trois Gaules	①
Basilique Notre-Dame de Fourvière	⑨
Cathédrale St-Jean	⑫
Eglise St-Polycarpe	②
Hôtel Gadagne	⑦
Hôtel de Ville	④
Musée de la Civilisation Gallo-Romaine	⑩
Musée de l'Imprimerie et de la Banque	⑥
Musée des Arts Décoratifs	⑭
Musée des Beaux Arts	⑤
Musée Historique des Tissus	⑮
Opéra de Lyon	③
Théâtres Romains	⑪
Tour Métallique	⑧

KEY

▨ Street by Street map *pp378–9*

Key to Symbols *see back flap*

0 meters 250
0 yards 250
Maison des Canuts
PL COLBERT
RUE DU BON PASTEUR
Amphithéâtre des Trois Gaules ①
RUE P. DUPONT
COURS GENERAL GIRAUD
TERREAUX
Eglise St-Polycarpe ②
Croix Paquet
Rhône
QUAI DE SERBIE
PLACE SATHONAY
RUE DES CAPUCINS
QUAI SAINT VINCENT
Saône
QUAI DE LA PECHERIE
Hôtel de Ville
PL DES TERREAUX ④
③ Opéra de Lyon
QUAI PIERRE SCIZE
QUAI DE BONDY
Hôtel de Ville
⑤ Musée des Beaux Arts
QUAI GAL. SARRAIL
Hôtel Gadagne ⑦
Tour Métallique ⑧
⑥ Musée de l'Imprimerie et de la Banque
MONTEE ST-BARTHELEMY
RUE DU BOEUF
RUE ST-JEAN
QUAI R. ROLLAND
QUAI ST-ANTOINE
RUE MERCIERE
RUE DE BREST
Cordeliers
Pont la Fayette
Gare SNCF la Part Dieu 2km (1.25miles)
Basilique Notre-Dame de Fourvière ⑨
Musée d'Art Contemporain
Musée de la Civilisation Gallo-Romaine ⑩
MONTEE DU CHEMIN NEUF
PL ST-JEAN
⑫ Cathédrale St-Jean
PL DES JACOBINS
RUE CHILDEBRIT
QUAI JULES COURMONT
Théâtres Romains ⑪
MONTEE
VIEUX LYON
Vieux Lyon
QUAI TILSITT
PRESQU'ÎLE
RUE DU PLAT
PLACE BELLECOUR
Pont de la Guillotiere
Guillotière
Bellecour
MACON
RUE DES FARGES
AUTOROUTE A6
QUAI FULCHIRON
Abbaye St-Martin d'Ainay ⑬
RUE SALA
⑭ Musée des Arts Décoratifs
⑮ Musée Historique des Tissus
Aéroport 25 km (16 miles) CHAMBERY
Saône
RUE VAUBECOUR
Ampère Victor-Hugo
RUE AUGUSTE-COMTE
RUE DE LA CHARITE
PLACE CARNOT
CLERMONT-FERRAND
Gare SNCF de Perrache
Q. DU DR GAILLETON
Rhône

Food market on quai St-Antoine

La Croix-Rousse
This area north of Presqu'île became the center of the city's silk-weaving industry in the 15th century. It is traced with covered passages known as *traboules*, used by weavers to transport their finished fabrics. To get a sense of them, enter at No. 6 place des Terreaux and continue along until you reach the **Eglise St-Polycarpe**. From here, it is a short walk to the ruins of the **Amphithéâtre des Trois Gaules**, built in AD 19, and the **Maison des Canuts**, with its traditional silk loom.

La Part-Dieu
This modern business area on the east bank of the Rhône has a TGV station, a huge shopping complex, and the **Auditorium Maurice-Ravel** for important cultural events.

🏛 **Musée de l'Imprimerie**
13 rue de la Poulaillerie. ***Tel*** *04 78 37 65 98.* ○ *Wed–Sun.* ● *public hols.* ✋ ✋

🏛 **Musée des Tissus**
34 rue de la Charité. ***Tel*** *04 78 38 42 00.* ○ *Tue–Sun.* ● *public hols.* ✋

🏛 **Musée Arts Décoratifs**
30 rue de la Charité. ***Tel*** *04 78 38 42 00.* ○ *Tue–Sun.* ● *public hols.* ✋

🏛 **Maison des Canuts**
10–12 rue d'Ivry. ***Tel*** *04 78 28 62 04.* ○ *Tue–Sat.* ● *public hols.* ✋ ♿ ✋

Environs
Bourgoin-Jallieu, southeast of Lyon, still prints silk for today's fashion houses, and has an excellent **Musée du Textile**.

Musée des Beaux Arts

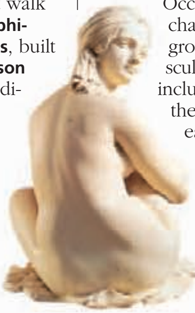
Lyon's Musée des Beaux Arts showcases the country's largest and probably most important collection of art after the Louvre. The museum is housed in the 17th-century Palais St-Pierre, a former Benedictine convent for the daughters of the nobility. The Musée d'Art Contemporain, formerly located in the Palais St-Pierre, is now at 81 quai Charles de Gaulle, north of the Parc Tête d'Or. Housed in a building designed by Renzo Piano, it specializes in works from the mid-1900s and later.

ANTIQUITIES

Included in this wide-ranging collection on the first floor are Egyptian archeological finds, Etruscan statuettes, and 4,000-year-old Cypriot ceramics. Temporary exhibits, with a separate entrance on 16 rue Edouard Herriott, are also on the ground and first floors.

SCULPTURE AND OBJETS D'ART

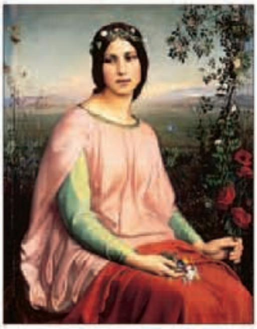
Occupying the old chapel on the ground floor, the sculpture department includes works from the French Romanesque period and Italian Renaissance, as well as late 19th- and early 20th-century pieces. Represented are Rodin and Bourdelle (whose statues also appear in the courtyard), Maillol, Despiau, and Pompon among others. The huge *objets d'art* collection, on the first floor, comprises medieval ivories, bronzes, and ceramics, coins, medals, weapons, jewelry, furniture, and tapestries.



Odalisque **(1841) by James Pradier**

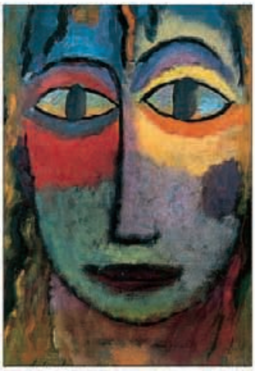
PAINTINGS AND DRAWINGS

The museum's superb collection of paintings occupies the first and second floors. It covers all periods and includes works by Spanish and Dutch masters, the French schools of the 17th, 18th, and 19th centuries, Impressionist and modern paintings, as well as works by the Lyon School, whose exquisite flower paintings were used as sources of inspiration by the designers of silk fabrics through the ages. On the first floor, the Cabinet d'Arts Graphiques has over 4,000 drawings and etchings by such artists as Delacroix, Poussin, Géricault, Degas, and Rodin (by appointment only).

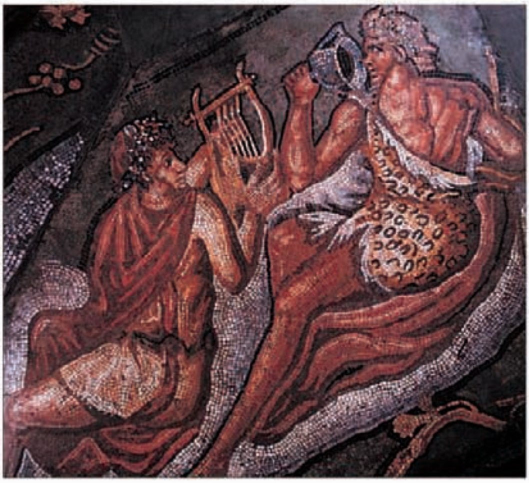


Fleurs des Champs **(1845) by Louis Janmot of the Lyon School**

🏛 **Musée des Beaux Arts**
Palais St-Pierre, 20 pl des Terreaux. ***Tel*** *04 72 10 17 40.* ○ *Wed–Mon.* ● *public hols.* ✋ ✋ ♿



La Méduse **(1923) by Alexeï von Jawlensky**



***Châtiment de Lycurgue* in the Musée Archéologique, St-Romain-en-Gal**

Vienne ⑤

Isère. 👥 *30,000.* 🚆 🚌 **i** *cours Brillier (04 74 53 80 30).* ⛺ *Sat.* 🎭 *International Jazz Festival (end Jun–mid-Jul).* **www**.vienne-tourisme.com

No other city in the Rhône Valley offers such a concentration of architectural history as Vienne. Located in a natural basin of land between the river and the hills, this site was recognized for both its strategic and aesthetic advantages by the Romans, who vastly expanded an existing village when they invaded the area in the 1st century BC.

The center of the Roman town was the **Temple d'Auguste et Livie** (10 BC) on place du Palais, a handsome structure supported by Corinthian columns. Not far away off place de Miremont are the remains of the **Jardin Archéologique de Cybèle**, a temple dedicated to the goddess Cybèle.

Vienne's Temple d'Auguste et Livie (1st century BC)

The **Théâtre Romain**, at the foot of Mont Pipet off rue du Cirque, was one of the largest amphitheaters in Roman France, capable of seating over 13,000 spectators. It was restored in 1938, and is now used for a variety of events, including an international jazz festival. From the very top seats the view of the town and river is spectacular.

Other interesting Roman vestiges include a fragment of Roman road in the public gardens and, on the southern edge of town, the **Pyramide du Cirque**, a curious structure about 65 feet (20 m) high that was once the centerpiece of the chariot racetrack. The **Musée des Beaux Arts et d'Archéologie** also has a good collection of Gallo-Roman artifacts, as well as 18th-century French faïence. This museum may close when the city's museums are re-grouped so check before visiting.

The **Cathédrale de St-Maurice** is the city's most important medieval monument. It was built between the 12th and 16th century and represents an unusual hybrid of Romanesque and Gothic styles. The cathedral is being restored so some areas are closed. Two of Vienne's earliest Christian churches are the 12th-century **Eglise St-André-le-Bas**, with richly carved capitals in its nave and cloister, and the **Eglise St-Pierre**, parts of which date from the 5th and 6th centuries. The latter houses the **Musée Lapidaire**, a museum of stone-carving with a collection of low reliefs and statues from Gallo-Roman buildings.

🏛 Musée des Beaux Arts et d'Archéologie

Pl de Miremont. ***Tel*** *04 74 85 50 42.* ○ *Apr–Oct: Tue–Sun; Nov–Mar: Tue–Fri & Sat–Sun pms.* ● *Jan 1, May 1, Nov 1 & 11, Dec 25.* 📷

🏛 Musée Lapidaire

Pl St-Pierre. ***Tel*** *04 74 85 20 35.* ○ *Tue–Sun.* ● *Nov–Mar: Sat & Sun am, Jan 1, May 1, Nov 1 & 11, Dec 25.* 📷 ♿ ✋ 🎧

Vienne's Cathédrale de St-Maurice

St-Romain-en-Gal ⑥

Rhône. 👥 *1,300.* 🚆 *Vienne.* **i** *Vienne (04 74 53 80 30).*

In 1967, building work in this commercial town directly across the Rhône from Vienne revealed extensive remains of a significant Roman community dating from 100 BC to AD 300. It comprises the remnants of villas, public baths, stores, and warehouses. Of particular interest is the House of the Ocean Gods, with a magnificent mosaic floor depicting the bearded Neptune and other ocean images.

Much of what has been unearthed during the ongoing excavations is housed in the **Musée Archéologique** adjoining the ruins. The impressive collection includes household objects, murals, and mosaics. The star exhibit is the *Châtiment de Lycurgue*, a mosaic discovered in 1907.

🏛 **Musée Archéologique**
***Tel** 04 74 53 74 01.* ○ *Tue–Sun.* ● *some publ hols.* ✋ 🎧 ♿ *restr.* 🛍
🍴 **www**.musees-gallo-romains.com

St-Étienne ❼

Loire. 👥 *180,000.* ✈ 🚆 🚌
ℹ *16 av de la Libération (04 77 49 39 00).* 🛒 *daily.* **www**.tourisme-st-etienne.com

The dour industrial renown brought to this city by coal-mining and armaments is slowly being shaken off, with urban redevelopment well under way and a spanking new tramway. The downtown area around place des Peuple is lively. Nearby, Jean-Michel Wilmotte has overhauled the **Musée d'Art et d'Industrie**, which covers St-Étienne's industrial background, including the development of the revolutionary Jacquard loom, and world-class collections of, among other things, bicycles and ribbon-making machines.

To the north of the city, the **Musée d'Art Moderne** has a collection of 20th-century art including works by Andy Warhol and Frank Stella.

Detail of the bizarre Palais Idéal du Facteur Cheval at Hauterives

🏛 **Musée d'Art et d'Industrie**
2 pl Louis Comte. ***Tel** 04 77 49 73 00.* ○ *Wed–Mon.* ● *some public hols.* ✋ ♿ 🛍

🏛 **Musée d'Art Moderne**
La Terrasse. ***Tel** 04 77 79 52 52.*
○ *Wed–Mon.* ● *some public hols & occasionally when exhibitions change.* ✋ ♿ 🛍

Palais Idéal du Facteur Cheval ❽

Hauterives, Drôme. 🚌 🚆 *Romans-sur-Isère* ***Tel** 04 75 68 81 19.*
○ *daily.* ● *Jan 1 & 15–31, Dec 25.*
✋ ✋ 🎧 ♿ *restricted.*
www.facteurcheval.com

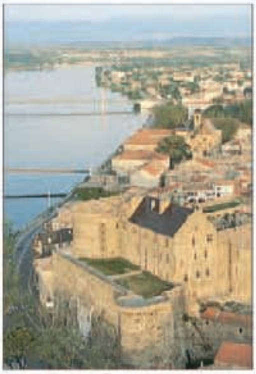
At Hauterives, 15 miles (25 km) north of Roman-sur-Isère on the D538, is one of the greatest follies of France, an eccentric "palace" made of stones and evoking Egyptian, Roman, Aztec, and Siamese styles of architecture. It was built by a local mailman, Ferdinand Cheval, who collected the stones during his daily rounds. His neighbors thought him crazy, but the project attracted the admiring attention of Picasso, the surrealist André Breton, and others.

The interior of the palace is inscribed with numerous mottos and exhortations by Cheval, the most poignant of which refers to his assiduous efforts to realize his lifelong fantasy: "1879–1912: 10,000 days, 93,000 hours, 33 years of toil."

THE RHÔNE'S BRIDGES

The Rhône has played a crucial role in French history, transporting armies and commercial traffic between the north and south. It has always been dangerous, a challenge to boatmen and builders for centuries. In 1825 the brilliant engineer, Marc Seguin, built the first suspension bridge using steel wire cables. This was followed by another 20 along the length of the Rhône, forever transforming communications between east and west.

Suspension bridge over the Rhône at Tournon-sur-Rhône



The town of Tournon-sur-Rhône

Tournon-sur-Rhône ⑨

Ardèche. 👥 *10,000.* 🚆 ℹ *Hôtel de la Tourette (04 75 08 10 23).* 🛒 *Wed & Sat.* **www**.ville-tournon.com

Situated at the foot of impressive granite hills, Tournon is a lovely town with gracious tree-lined promenades and an imposing 11th–16th-century **château**. The latter houses a museum of local history, and has fine views of the town and river from its terraces.

The adjacent **Collégiale St-Julien**, with its square bell-tower and elaborate façade, is an interesting example of the Italian influence on architecture in the region during the 14th century. Inside is a powerful *Résurrection*, painted in 1576 by Capassin, a pupil of Raphael.

On quai Charles de Gaulle, the **Lycée Gabriel-Fauré** is the oldest high school in France, dating from 1536. Directly across the Rhône from Tournon, the village of **Tain l'Hermitage** is famous for its steep-climbing vineyards which produce both red and white Hermitage, the finest of all Rhône wines.

Environs

From Tournon's main square, the place Jean Jaurès, a narrow, twisting road signposted the **Route Panoramique** leads via the villages of Plats and St-Romain-de-Lerps to St-Péray. This route offers breathtaking views at every turn, and, at St-Romain, you are rewarded with a superb panorama extending over 13 *départements*.

Valence ⑩

Drôme. 👥 *67,000.* 🚆 🚌 ℹ *11 bd Bancel (08 92 70 70 99).* 🛒 *Thu & Sat.* 🎭 *Summer Music (Jul).* **www**.valencetourisme.com

Valence is a large, thriving market town set on the east bank of the Rhône and looking across to the cliffs of the Ardèche. Its principal sight is the Romanesque **Cathédrale St-Apollinaire** on place des Clercs, founded in 1095 and rebuilt in the 17th century.

Alongside the cathedral in the former bishop's palace, the small **Musée des Beaux Arts** contains a collection of late 18th-century chalk drawings of Rome by Hubert Robert.

A short walk from here are two Renaissance mansions. The **Maison des Têtes** at No. 57 Grande Rue was built in 1532 and is embellished with the sculpted heads of ancient Greeks including Aristotle, Homer, and Hippocrates. On rue Pérollerie, the **Maison Dupré-Latour** has a finely sculptured porch and staircase.

The **Parc Jouvet**, south of avenue Gambetta, offers 14 acres (6 hectares) of pools and gardens, with fine views across the river to the ruined **Château de Crussol**.

🏛 **Musée des Beaux Arts**

4 pl des Ormeaux. ***Tel*** *04 75 79 20 80.* ● *until 2011.* ♿

The limestone Pont d'Arc

The Ardèche ⑪

Ardèche. ✈ *Avignon.* 🚆 *Montélimar* 🚌 *Montélimar, Vallon Pont d'Arc.* ℹ *Vallon Pont d'Arc (04 75 88 04 01).* **www**.vallon-pont-darc.com

Over the course of thousands of years, wind and water have endowed this south-central region of France

CÔTES DU RHÔNE

Rising in the Swiss Alps and traveling south to the Mediterranean, the mighty Rhône is the common thread that links the many vineyards of the Rhône Valley. A hierarchy of *appellations* divides into three levels of quality: at the base, the regional Côtes du Rhône provides the bulk of the Rhône's wines; next, Côtes du Rhône-Villages comprises a plethora of picturesque villages; and, at the top, there are 13 individual *appellations*. The most famous are the steep slopes of Hermitage and Côte Rôtie in the northern Rhône, and historic Châteauneuf-du-Pape *(see p503)* in the south. The lion's share of production is of red wine, which, based on the syrah grape, is often spicy, full-bodied, and robust.

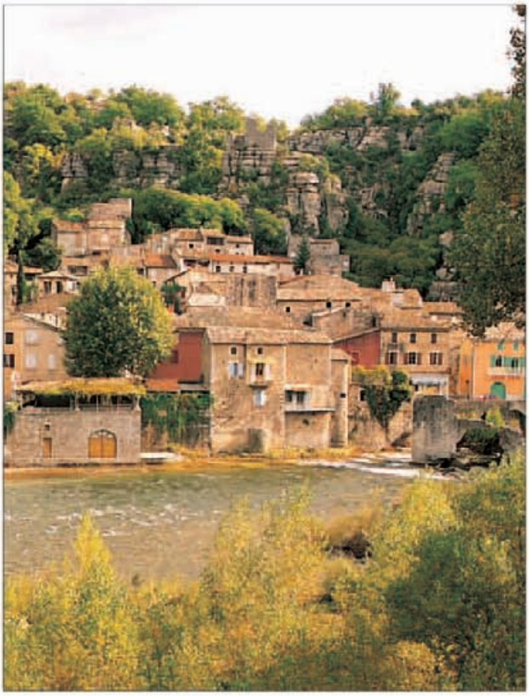
Harvest in a Côtes du Rhône vineyard

with such a wild and rugged landscape that it is often more reminiscent of the American southwest than the verdure commonly associated with the French countryside. This visible drama is repeated underground as well, since the Ardèche is honeycombed with enormous stalagmite- and stalactite-ornamented caves. The most impressive are the **Aven d'Orgnac** (*aven* meaning pothole) to the south of Vallon-Pont-d'Arc, and the **Grotte de la Madeleine**, reached via a signposted path from the D290.

For those who prefer to stay above ground, the most arresting natural scenery in the region is the **Gorges de l'Ardèche**, best seen from the D290, a two-lane road with frequent viewpoints that parallels the recessed river for 20 miles (32 km). Nearly at the head of the gorge, heading west, is the **Pont d'Arc**, a natural limestone "bridge" spanning the river, created by erosion and the elements.

Canoeing and white-water rafting are the two most popular sports here. All the equipment necessary can be rented locally; operators at Vallon-Pont-d'Arc (among many other places) rent out two-person canoes and organize return transportation from St-Martin d'Ardèche, 20 miles (32 km) downstream. Note that the river Ardèche is one of France's fastest flowing rivers – it is safest in May and June; by autumn its waters can be unpredictable and dangerous, especially for beginners.

The Gorges de l'Ardèche, between Vallon-Pont-d'Arc and Pont St-Esprit



The village of Vogüé on the banks of the river Ardèche

The softer side of the region is found in its ancient and picturesque villages, gracious spa towns, vineyards and plantations of Spanish chestnuts (from which the delectable *marron glacé* is produced).

Some 8 miles (13 km) south of Aubenas, the 12th-century village of **Balazuc** is typical of the region, its stone houses built on a clifftop overlooking a secluded gorge of the river Ardèche. There are fine views as you approach on the D294.

Neighboring **Vogüé** is nestled between the river Ardèche and a limestone cliff. A tiny but atmospheric village, its most commanding sight is the 12th-century **Château de Vogüé**, once the seat of the barons of Languedoc. Rebuilt in the 17th century, the building houses a museum featuring exhibitions about the region.

Château de Vogüé
Tel *04 75 37 01 95.* ○ *Easter–Jun: Wed–Sun; Jul–mid-Sep: daily; mid-Sep–mid-Nov: w/e pms.* 📷
www.chateaudevogue.net

Vals-les-Bains ⓬

Ardèche. 👥 *3,700.* 🚌 *Montélimar.*
ℹ *rue Jean Jaurès (04 75 37 49 27).*
Thu & Sun (& Tue in summer).

This small spa town retains a hint of its past elegance. It is situated in the valley of the Volane, where there are at least 150 springs, of which all but two are cold. The water, which contains bicarbonate of soda and other minerals, is said to aid digestive problems, rheumatism, and diabetes.

Discovered around 1600, Vals-les-Bains is one of the few spas in southern France to have been overlooked by the Romans. The town reached the height of its popularity in the late 19th century, and most of its parks and architecture retain something of the Belle Epoque. Vals is a convenient first stop for an exploration of the Ardèche, with plenty of hotels and restaurants.

Environs

About 5 miles (8 km) east of Vals is the superb Romanesque church of **St-Julien du Serre**.

A farm near Le Poët Laval, east of Montélimar

Montélimar ⑬

Drôme. 👥 *33,000.* 🚆 🚌 ℹ *allées Provençales (04 75 01 00 20).* 🧺 *Wed–Sat.* **www**.montelimar-tourisme.com

Whether you choose to make a detour to Montélimar will largely depend on how sweet a tooth you might have. The main curiosity of this market town is its medieval center, chock-full of shops selling almond-studded nougat. This splendid confection has been made here since the start of the 17th century, when the almond tree was first introduced into France from Asia.

The **Château des Adhémar**, a mélange of 12th-, 14th-, and 16th-century architecture, surveys the town from a tall hill to the east.

🏰 Château des Adhémar
Tel *04 75 00 62 30.* ○ *Apr–Oct: daily; Nov–Mar: Wed–Mon (for exhibitions only).* ● *Jan 1, Dec 25.* 🎟

Environs
The countryside east of Montélimar is full of picturesque medieval villages and scenic routes. **La Bégude-de-Mazenc** is a thriving little vacation center, with its fortified Old Town perched on a hilltop. Farther east is **Le Poët Laval**, a tiny medieval village of honey-colored stone buildings set in the Alpine foothills. **Dieulefit**, the capital of this beautiful region, has several small hotels and restaurants, as well as facilities for tennis, swimming, and fishing. To the south, the fortified village of **Taulignan** is known for its truffles.

Grignan ⑭

Drôme. 👥 *1,360.* 🚌 ℹ *pl du Jeu de Ballon (04 75 46 56 75).* 🧺 *Tue.* **www**.tourisme-paysdegrignan.com

Attractively situated on a rocky hill surrounded by fields of lavender, this charming little village owes its fame to Madame de Sévigné *(see p91)*, who wrote many of her celebrated letters while staying at the **Château de Grignan**.

Built during the 15th and 16th centuries, the château is one of the finest Renaissance structures in this part of France. Its interior contains a good collection of Louis XII furniture and Aubusson tapestries.

From the château's terrace, a panoramic view extends as far as the Vivarais mountains in the Ardèche. Directly below the terrace, the **Eglise de St-Saveur** was built in the 1530s, and contains the tomb of Madame de Sévigné, who died here in 1696 at the age of 69.

🏰 Château de Grignan
Tel *04 75 91 83 50.* ○ *Apr–Oct: daily; Nov–Mar: Wed–Mon.* ● *Jan 1, Dec 25.* 🎟 🖐 *obligatory*

Nyons ⑮

Drôme. 👥 *7,000.* 🚌 ℹ *pl de la Libération (04 75 26 10 35).* 🧺 *Thu.* **www**.paysdenyons.com

Nyons is synonymous with olives in France, since the region is a major center of olive production. All manner of olive products can be bought here at the colorful Thursday morning market, from soap to *tapenade*, the olive paste so popular in the south.

The **Quartier des Forts** is Nyons' oldest quarter, a warren of narrow streets and stepped alleyways, the most rewarding of which is the covered rue des Grands Forts. Spanning the river Aygues is a graceful 13th-century bridge; on its town side are several old mills turned into stores where you can see the enormous presses once used to extract olive oil. The **Musée de l'Olivier** further explains the cultivation of the olive tree and the myriad local uses found for its fruit.

There is a fine view of the area from the belvedere overlooking the town. Sheltered as it is by mountains, Nyons enjoys an almost exotic climate, with all the trees and plants of the Riviera to be found here.

🏛 Musée de l'Olivier
Av des Tilleuls. ***Tel*** *04 75 26 12 12.* ○ *call to check.* 🎟 📷 ♿

Environs
From Nyons, the D94 leads west to **Suze-la-Rousse**, a pleasant wine-producing village which, during the Middle Ages, was the most important town in the area. Today, it is best known for its "university of wine," one of the most respected centers of oenology in

The hilltop town of Grignan and its Renaissance château

Olive groves just outside Nyons

the world. It is housed in the 14th-century **Château de Suze-la-Rousse**, the hunting lodge of the princes of Orange. The interior courtyard is a masterpiece of Renaissance architecture and some rooms preserve original paint and stuccowork.

⌂ **Château de Suze-la-Rousse**
Tel *04 75 04 81 44.* ○ *daily.*
● *Jan 1, Dec 25.* ♿ ☝ 🛍

Playing *boules* in Nyons

Briançon ⑯

Hautes Alpes. 👥 *12,000.* 🚆 🚌
ℹ *1 pl du Temple. (04 92 21 08 50).*
⊖ *Wed.* 🎭 *Classical Music (Aug).*
www.ot-briancon.com

Briançon – the highest town in Europe at 4,330 ft (1,320 m) – has been an important stronghold since pre-Roman times, guarding as it does the road to the Col de Montgenèvre, one of the oldest and most important passes into Italy. At the beginning of the 18th century, the town was fortified with ramparts and gates – still splendidly intact – by Louis XIV's military architect, Vauban. If driving, park at the Champs de Mars, and enter the pedestrianized Old Town via the **Porte de Pignerol**.

This leads to the **grande rue**, a steep, narrow street with a stream running down the middle, bordered by lovely period houses. The nearby **Eglise de Notre-Dame** dates from 1718, and was also built by Vauban with an eye to defence. To visit Vauban's **citadel**, stop by the tourist office, which organizes guided tours.

Briançon is a major sports center, with skiing in winter; rafting, biking, and parapente in summer *(see pp660–61)*.

Environs

Just west of Briançon, the **Parc National des Ecrins** is the largest of the French national parks, offering lofty peaks and glaciers, and a magnificent variety of Alpine flowers.

The **Parc Régional du Queyras** is reached from Briançon over the rugged Col de l'Izoard. A wall of 9,850-ft (3,000-m) peaks separates this wild and beautiful national park from neighboring Italy.

Le Bourg d'Oisans ⑰

Isère. 👥 *3,000.* 🚌 *to Grenoble.*
🚐 *to Le Bourg d'Oisans.* ℹ *quai Girard (04 76 80 03 25).* ⊖ *Sat.*

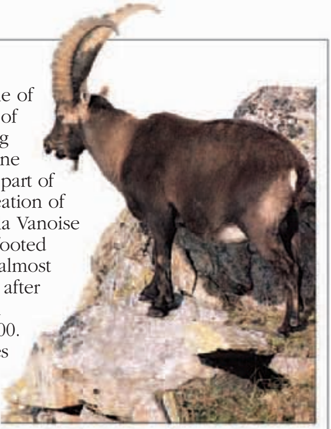
Le Bourg d'Oisans is an ideal base from which to explore the Romanche valley. The area provides numerous opportunities for outdoor sports such as bicycling, rock-climbing, and skiing, in the nearby resort of **L'Alpe d'Huez**.

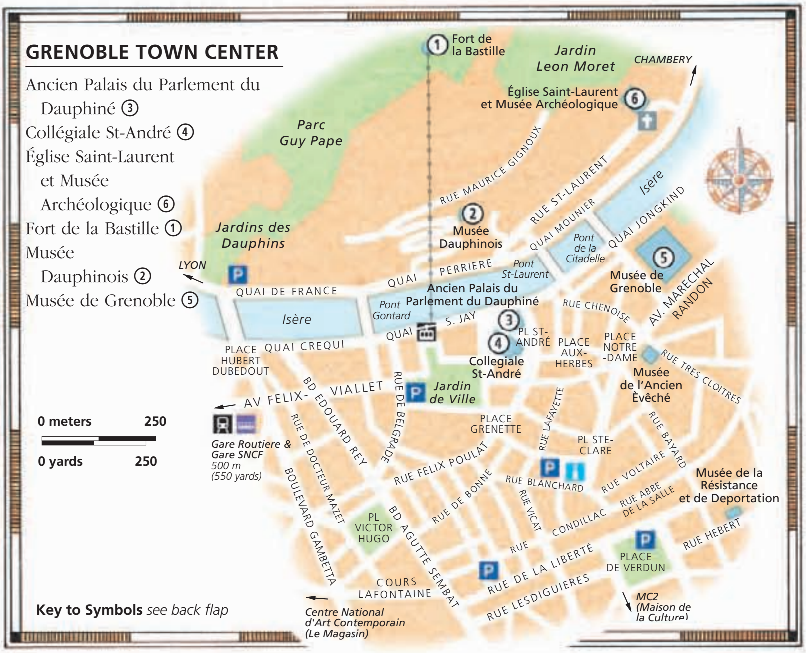
Silver and other minerals have been mined here since the Middle Ages, and today the town has a scientific reputation as a center for geology and mineralogy. Its **Musée des Minéraux et de la Faune des Alpes** is renowned for its collection of crystals and precious stones.

🏛 **Musée des Minéraux et de la Faune des Alpes**
Pl de l'Eglise. ***Tel*** *04 76 80 27 54.* ○ *2–6pm Wed–Mon (Jul–Aug: 11am–7pm).* ● *Jan 1, Mar, Nov, Dec.* ♿

LIFE ON HIGH

The Alpine ibex is one of the rarest inhabitants of the French Alps, living high above the tree line for all but the coldest part of the year. Until the creation of the Parc National de la Vanoise *(see p323)*, this sure-footed climber had become almost extinct in France, but after rigorous conservation there are now over 500. Both males and females have horns; in the oldest males these can be almost 3 ft (1 m) long.


An ibex in the Parc National de la Vanoise



GRENOBLE TOWN CENTER

- Ancien Palais du Parlement du Dauphiné ③
- Collégiale St-André ④
- Église Saint-Laurent et Musée Archéologique ⑥
- Fort de la Bastille ①
- Musée Dauphinois ②
- Musée de Grenoble ⑤

Fort de la Bastille
Jardin Leon Moret
CHAMBERY
Église Saint-Laurent et Musée Archéologique
Parc Guy Pape
RUE MAURICE GIGNOUX
RUE ST-LAURENT
Isère
QUAI MOUNIER
QUAI JONGKIND
Musée Dauphinois
Pont de la Citadelle
Jardins des Dauphins
LYON
QUAI PERRIERE
Pont St-Laurent
Musée de Grenoble
QUAI DE FRANCE
Ancien Palais du Parlement du Dauphiné
AV. MARECHAL RANDON
Isère
Pont Gontard
QUAI S. JAY
RUE CHENOISE
PL ST-ANDRÉ
PLACE AUX-HERBES
PLACE NOTRE-DAME
PLACE HUBERT DUBEDOUT
QUAI CREQUI
Collegiale St-André
Musée de l'Ancien Évêché
RUE TRES CLOITRES
AV FELIX-VIALLET
BD EDOUARD REY
RUE DE BELGRADE
Jardin de Ville
0 meters 250
0 yards 250
PLACE GRENETTE
RUE LAFAYETTE
PL STE-CLARE
RUE BAYARD
Gare Routiere & Gare SNCF 500 m (550 yards)
RUE DE DOCTEUR MAZET
BOULEVARD GAMBETTA
RUE FELIX POULAT
RUE DE BONNE
RUE BLANCHARD
RUE VOLTAIRE
RUE ABBE DE LA SALLE
Musée de la Résistance et de Deportation
PL VICTOR HUGO
BD AGUTTE SEMBAT
RUE VICAT
RUE CONDILLAC
RUE HEBERT
PLACE DE VERDUN
COURS LAFONTAINE
RUE DE LA LIBERTÉ
RUE LESDIGUIERES
MC2 (Maison de la Culture)
Centre National d'Art Contemporain (Le Magasin)

Key to Symbols *see back flap*

Hôtel Lesdiguières, Grenoble's imposing former town hall

Grenoble ⑱

Isère. 👥 *165,000.* ✈ 🚆 🚌
ℹ *14 rue de la République (04 76 42 41 41).* 🛒 *Tue–Sun.*
www.grenoble-isere.info

Ancient capital of the Dauphiné region and site of the 1968 Winter Olympics, Grenoble is a thriving city, home to the science-oriented University of Grenoble, and a center of chemical and electronics industries and nuclear research. It is attractively situated at the confluence of the Drac and Isère rivers, with the Vercors and Chartreuse massifs to the west and north.

A cable car starting at quai Stéphane-Jay whisks you up to the 19th-century **Fort de la Bastille**, where you are rewarded with superb views of the city and surrounding mountains. From here, paths lead down through the Parc Guy Pape and Jardin des Dauphins to the **Musée Dauphinois**, a regional museum in a 17th-century convent devoted to local history, arts, and crafts. Nearby, **Église Saint-Laurent et Musée Archéologique** exhibits decorative and religious art as well as medieval artifacts, but is closed for renovations.

On the left bank of the Isère, the focus of life is the pedestrian area around the lively place Grenette. Nearby, the place St-André is the heart of the medieval city, overlooked by Grenoble's oldest buildings including the 13th-century **Collégiale St-André** and the 16th-century **Ancien Palais du Parlement du Dauphiné**.

The **Musée de Grenoble** exhibits art from every period, including works by Chagall, Picasso, and Matisse. The **Musée de l'Ancien Evêché** recounts the history of Isère, and includes a visit to the 4th-century baptistry. On rue Hébert, the **Musée de la Résistance et de la Déportation** has documents relating to the French Resistance. Temporary displays of contemporary art can be seen at **Le Magasin** (Centre National d'Art Contemporain), a renovated warehouse on the cours Berriat. In the Quartier Malherbe, **MC2** (Maison de la Culture) hosts everything from concerts and dance to theater.

🏛 Musée Dauphinois

30 rue Maurice Gignoux. ***Tel*** *04 57 58 89 01.* ○ *Wed–Mon.* ● *Jan 1, May 1, Dec 25.*

🏛 Église Saint-Laurent et Musée Archéologique

Pl St-Laurent. ***Tel*** *04 76 44 78 68.*
● *closed – call for details.*

Grenoble's gondola cable car

🏛 **Musée de Grenoble**
5 pl de Lavalette. ***Tel*** *04 76 63 44 44.* ○ *Wed–Mon.* ● *Jan 1, May 1, Dec 25.* 💰 ♿ ☞ 🛍 ☕

🏛 **Musée de l'Ancien Evêché**
2 rue Très Cloîtres. ***Tel*** *04 76 03 15 25.* ○ *daily.* ● *Tue am.* ♿

🏛 **Musée de la Résistance et de la Déportation**
14 rue Hébert. ***Tel*** *04 76 42 38 53.* ○ *daily.* ● *Tue am, Jan 1, May 1, Dec 25.* 💰 ♿

🏛 **Le Magasin (CNAC)**
155 cours Berriat. ***Tel*** *04 76 21 95 84.* ○ *Tue–Sun pms only (during exhibitions).* ♿

🏛 **MC2**
4 rue Paul Claudel. ***Tel*** *04 76 00 79 79.* ○ *varies – phone to check.* 💰 ♿ **www**.mc2grenoble.fr

The Vercors ⑲

Isère & Drôme. ✈ *Grenoble.* 🚆 *Romans-sur-Isère, St-Marcellin, Grenoble.* 🚌 *Pont-en-Royans, Romans-sur-Isère.* ℹ *Pont-en-Royans (04 76 36 09 10).* **www**.parc-du-vercors.fr

To the south and west of Grenoble, the Vercors is one of the most magnificent regional parks in France – a wilderness of pine forests, mountains, waterfalls, caves, and deep, narrow gorges.

The D531 out of Grenoble passes through **Villard-de-Lans** – a good base for excursions – and continues to the dark **Gorges de la Bournes**. About 5 miles (8 km) farther west, the hamlet of **Pont-en-Royans** is sited on a limestone gorge, its stone houses built into rocks overlooking the river Bourne.

South of Pont-en-Royans along the D76, the **Route de Combe-Laval** snakes along a sheer cliff above the roaring river. The **Grands Goulets**, 4 miles (6.5 km) to the east, is a spectacularly deep, narrow gorge overlooked by sheer cliffs that virtually shut out the sky above. The best-known mountain in the park is the **Mont Aiguille**, a soaring outcrop of 6,844 ft (2,086 m).

The Vercors was a key base for the French Resistance during World War II. In July 1944 the Germans launched an aerial attack on the region, flattening several of its villages. There are Resistance museums at Vassieux and Grenoble.

Cows grazing in the Chartreuse

The Chartreuse ⑳

Isère & Savoie. ✈ *Grenoble, Chambéry.* 🚆 *Grenoble, Voiron.* 🚌 *St-Pierre-de-Chartreuse.* ℹ *St-Pierre-de-Chartreuse (04 76 88 62 08).*

From Grenoble, the D512 leads north toward Chambéry into the Chartreuse, a majestic region of mountains and forests where hydroelectricity was invented in the late 19th century. The **Monastère de la Grande Chartreuse** is the main local landmark, situated just west of St-Pierre-de-Chartreuse off the D520-B.

Founded by St-Bruno in 1084, the monastery owes its fame to the sticky green and yellow Chartreuse liqueurs first produced by the monks in 1605. The recipe, based on a secret herbal elixir of 130 ingredients, is now produced in the nearby town of Voiron.

The monastery itself is inhabited by about 40 monks who live in silence and seclusion. It is not open to visitors, but there is a museum at the entrance, the **Musée de la Correrie**, which faithfully depicts the daily routine of the Carthusian monks.

🏛 **Musée de la Correrie**
St-Pierre-de-Chartreuse. ***Tel*** *04 76 88 60 45.* ○ *Feb–Nov: pms daily.* 💰

A farm in the pine-clad mountains of the Chartreuse

Chambéry ㉑

Savoie. 👥 *61,000.* ✈ 🚆 🚌
i *24 bd de la Colonne (04 79 33 42 47).* 🛒 *Tue, Sat.* **www**.chambery-tourisme.com

Once the capital of Savoy, this dignified city has aristocratic airs and a distinctly Italianate feel. Its best-loved monument is the splendidly extravagant **Fontaine des Eléphants** on rue de Boigne. It was erected in 1838 to honor the Comte de Boigne, a native son who left to his home town some of the fortune he amassed in India.

The **Château des Ducs de Savoie**, at the opposite end of rue de Boigne, was built in the 14th century and is now mostly occupied by the Préfecture. Only parts of the building can be visited, such as the late Gothic Ste-Chapelle.

On the southeast edge of town is the 17th-century country house, **Les Charmettes**, where the philosopher Rousseau lived with his mistress Madame de Warens. It is worth a visit for its gardens and museum of memorabilia.

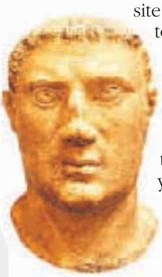
Les Charmettes
892 chemin des Charmettes. ***Tel*** *04 79 33 39 44.* ○ *Wed–Mon.* ● *public hols.* 🎧

The Lac du Bourget at Aix-les-Bains

Aix-les-Bains ㉒

Savoie. 👥 *26,000.* ✈ 🚆
i *pl Maurice Mollard (04 79 88 68 00).* 🛒 *Wed & Sat am.* 🎪 *Rock Music (Jul).* **www**.aixlesbains.com

The great Romantic poet Lamartine rhapsodized over the beauty of Lac du Bourget, site of the gracious spa town of Aix-les-Bains. The heart of the town is the 19th-century **Thermes Nationaux**, thermal baths which were first enjoyed by the Romans over 2,000 years ago – in the basement are the remains of the original Roman baths. The baths are now closed to visitors due to safety reasons and it is not known if they will re-open. Opposite the baths, the 2nd-century AD **Temple of Diana** contains a collection of Gallo-Roman artifacts. The nearby **Musée Faure** has some stunning Impressionist paintings by Degas and Sisley, Rodin sculptures, and Lamartine memorabilia.



Roman statue in the Temple of Diana

Thermes Nationaux
Pl Maurice Mollard. ***Tel*** *04 79 35 38 50.* ● *closed until further notice, possibly permanently.* 🎫 📷
www.thermaix.com

Musée Faure
Villa des Chimères, 10 bd des Côtes. ***Tel*** *04 79 61 06 57.* ○ *Wed–Mon (mid-Nov–Feb: Wed–Sun).* ● *Dec 18–Jan 2, public hols.* 🎫 ♿

Environs

Boats leave from Aix's Grand Port and sail across Lac du Bourget to the **Abbaye d'Hautecombe**, a Benedictine abbey containing the mausoleum of the Savoyard dynasty.

The small town of **Le Revard**, just east of Aix on the D913, has spectacular views of the lake and Mont Blanc.

Annecy ㉓

Haute Savoie. 👥 *51,000.* ✈ 🚆 🚌 **i** *1 rue Jean Jaurès (04 50 45 00 33).* 🛒 *Tue, Fri–Sun.* **www**.lac-annecy.com 🎪 *Fête du Lac (firework display; 1st Sat Aug).*

Annecy is one of the most charming towns in the Alps, set at the northern tip of Lac

Annecy's 12th-century Palais de l'Isle, with the Thiou canal in the foreground

Cycling along the shores of Lac Léman (Lake Geneva)

d'Annecy and surrounded by snow-capped mountains. Its small medieval quarter is laced with canals, flower-covered bridges, and arcaded streets. Strolling around is the main attraction here, though there are a couple of specific sights worth having a look at more closely: the formidable **Palais de l'Isle**, a 12th-century prison in the middle of the Thiou canal; and the turreted **Château d'Annecy**, set high on a hill above the town with impressive views of Vieil Annecy and the crystal-clear lake beyond.

The best spot for swimming and watersports is at the eastern end of the avenue d'Albigny near the Imperial Palace hotel, while boat trips leave from quai Napoléon III.

Environs

One of the best ways to enjoy the area's spectacular scenery is to take a boat from Annecy to **Talloires**, a tiny lakeside village celebrated for its hotels and restaurants. Facing Talloires across the lake is the 15th-century **Château de Duingt** (not open to visitors).

On the west bank of the lake, the Semnoz mountain and its summit, the **Crêt de Châtillon**, offer superb views of Mont Blanc and the Alps *(see pp322–3)*.

Lac Léman ㉔

Haute Savoie & Switzerland. ✈ *Geneva.* 🚉 🚌 *Geneva, Thonon-les-Bains, Évian-les-Bains.* ℹ *Thonon-les-Bains (04 50 71 55 55).*

The stirring scenery and gentle climate of the French shore of Lake Geneva (Lac Léman to the French) has made it a popular and fashionable resort area since the first spa buildings were erected at Évian-les-Bains in 1839.

Yvoire is a fine place to begin a visit to the area. This medieval walled fishing port is guarded by a massive 14th-century castle, and its tightly packed houses are bedecked with colorful flower boxes.

Farther east along Lac Léman is **Thonon-les-Bains**, a prosperous, well-manicured little spa town perched on a cliff overlooking the lake. A funicular takes you down to Rives, the small harbor at the foot of the cliffs, where sailboats can be rented and excursion boats to the Swiss cities of Geneva and Lausanne stop. Just outside the town is the 15th-century **Château de Ripaille**, made famous by its one-time resident, Duke Amadeus VIII, who later became antipope (Felix V).

Though it has been modernized and acquired an international reputation for its eponymous spring water, **Évian-les-Bains** still exudes a polite *vie en rose* charm. The tree-lined lakefront promenade teems with leisurely strollers, while more energetic types can avail themselves of all kinds of spors facilities including tennis, golf, riding, sailing, and skiing in the winter. State-of-the-art spa treatments are available, and the exotic domed casino is busy at night, with blackjack, roulette, and baccarat, among other games.

From Évian there are daily ferries across Lake Geneva to Lausanne in Switzerland, as well as bus excursions into the surrounding mountains.

The elegant Hôtel Royal in Évian-les-Bains *(see p578)*

SOUTHWEST FRANCE

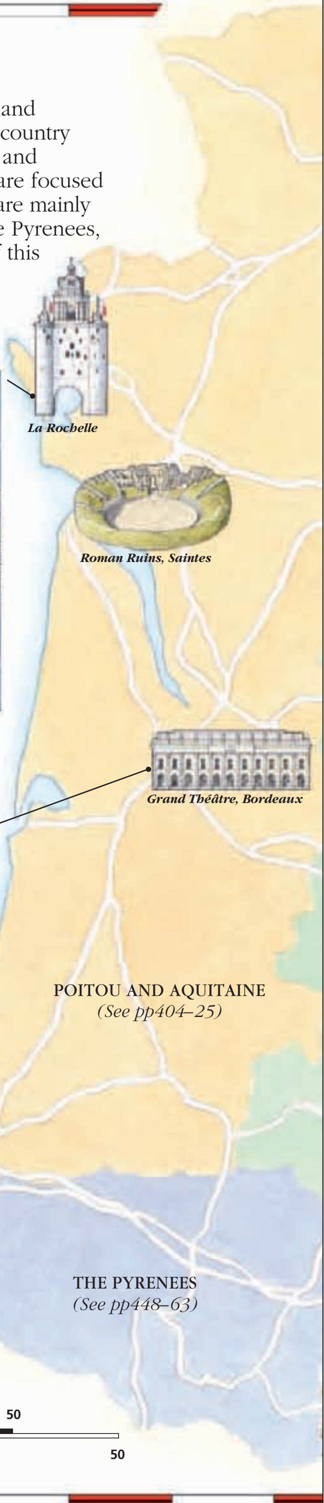
INTRODUCING SOUTHWEST FRANCE 394–403
POITOU AND AQUITAINE 404–425
PERIGORD, QUERCY, AND GASCONY 426–447
THE PYRENEES 448–463

Introducing Southwest France

The southwest is farming France, a green and peaceful land nurturing crops from sunflowers to *foie gras*. Other key country products include Landes forest timber, Bordeaux wines, and Cognac. Major modern industries, including aerospace, are focused on the two chief cities, Bordeaux and Toulouse. Visitors are mainly drawn to the wide Atlantic beaches, the ski slopes of the Pyrenees, and the rural calm of the Dordogne. The major sights of this favored region are shown here and include some of France's most celebrated Romanesque buildings.

La Rochelle's harbor *is today a haven for pleasure yachts as well as an important commercial port* (see p416). *Tour de la Chaîne and Tour St-Nicolas protect the entrance of the old port. The town's historic center is filled with cobbled streets lined by merchants' houses.*

Bordeaux *is a town of grand buildings and monuments, including its theater. The Monument aux Girondins, with its magnificent bronze statues and fountains, stands at the 18th-century Esplanade des Quinconces* (see pp420–22).

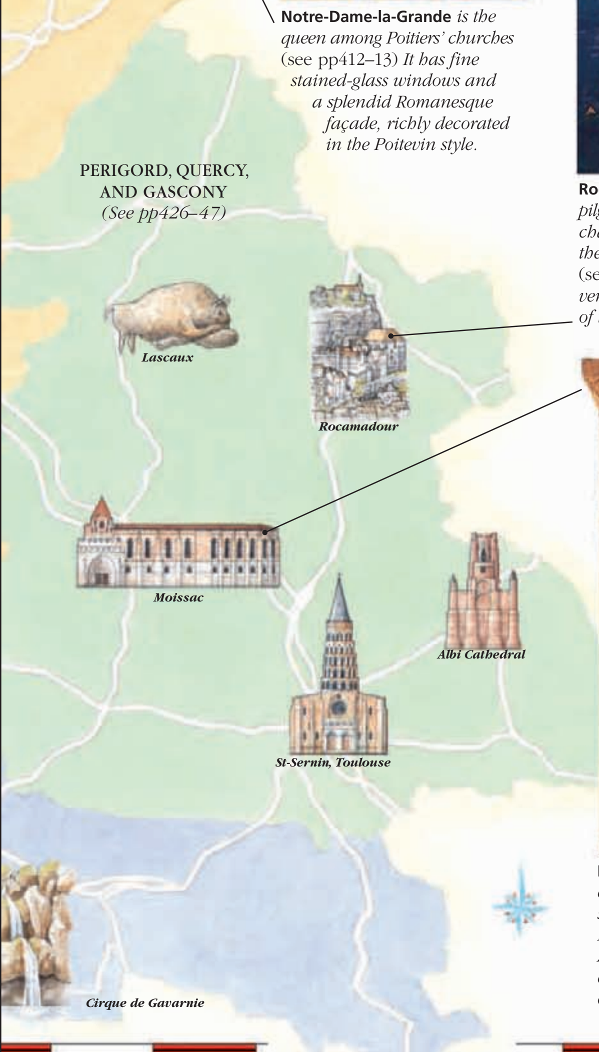

La Rochelle
Roman Ruins, Saintes
Grand Théâtre, Bordeaux
POITOU AND AQUITAINE
(See pp404–25)
THE PYRENEES
(See pp448–63)
0 kilometers 50
0 miles 50

◁ **Aerial view over the cathedral and old town of Cahors, in the Lot**

Notre-Dame-la-Grande, Poitiers

Notre-Dame-la-Grande *is the queen among Poitiers' churches* (see pp412–13) *It has fine stained-glass windows and a splendid Romanesque façade, richly decorated in the Poitevin style.*

Rocamadour *is both a place of pilgrimage and a tourist sight, its chapels and shrines clinging to the edge of the rocky hillside* (see pp436–7). *Among its many venerated features is the statue of the Black Virgin and Child.*


PERIGORD, QUERCY, AND GASCONY
(See pp426–47)
Lascaux
Rocamadour
Moissac
Albi Cathedral
St-Sernin, Toulouse
Cirque de Gavarnie

Moissac Abbey *is the pre-eminent medieval monastery in southwest France* (see pp442–3). *Its tympanum, representing the Apocalypse, and the cloister capitals are outstanding examples of Romanesque sculpture.*

The Flavors of Southwest France

"Great cooking and great wines make a paradise on earth," said Henri IV of his own region, Gascony. The southwest does indeed fulfill the requirements of the most demanding gourmet. The Atlantic coast supplies fine seafood; Bordeaux produces some of France's best wines to complement its rich cooking; geese and ducks provide the fat that is key to local cuisine; and regional produce includes delicacies such as *foie gras*, truffles, and wild mushrooms. The Pyrenees offer beef and lamb grazed on mountain pastures, cheese and *charcuterie*, and the Basque country adds the spicy notes of red peppers and fine chocolate.

Espelette peppers

Noix du Quercy
9€ le kg

Walnuts, one of the southwest's most famous products

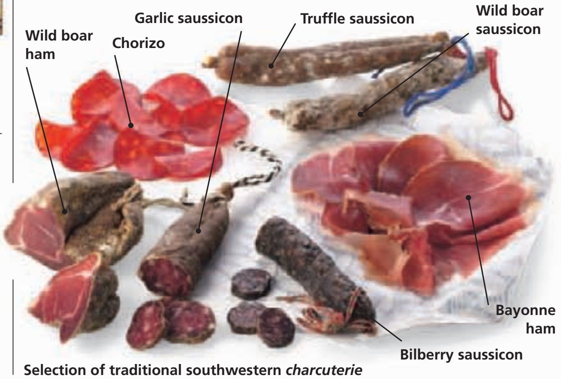
POITOU AND AQUITAINE

The coast is famous for its seafood, and is the most important oyster-producing region of France – the oysters of Marennes-Oleron are of especially high quality. The species of blue algae on which they feed give them a distinctive green coloring. Oysters are usually served simply with lemon or shallot vinegar, but in Bordeaux they like to eat them with little sausages. Mussels are also raised here, and the sea yields a variety of fish. Eels, lamprey and sturgeon are caught in the Gironde estuary.

Poitou-Charentes is one of France's main goat-rearing areas, producing cheeses such as *chabichou de Poitou*, a small, soft, cylindrical cheese of distinct flavor.

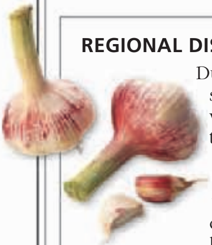
PERIGORD, QUERCY, AND GASCONY

High-quality ducks, geese, and poultry form the basis of the cuisine of this region, and their fat is a key ingredient of many dishes from simple *pommes sarladaises* (potatoes cooked in goose fat) to *confit*, where entire duck legs are preserved in their own fat. The ultimate



Selection of traditional southwestern *charcuterie*

REGIONAL DISHES AND SPECIALTIES



Pink garlic

Duck is one of the essential ingredients of southwestern cooking, and is served in a variety of ways. The *magret* is the breast – the best of all coming from a duck that has been bred for *foie gras*. Usually served pink *(rose)*, it may be served with a variety of sauces but is most perfectly complemented by the smoky flavor of local cèpe mushrooms in season. Duck *confit* is usually made with the legs, but gizzards are also preserved in this way. *Foie gras* is the most expensive (and controversial) product, resulting from the process of *gavage*, when the duck or goose is force-fed maize to enlarge and enrich its liver. *Foie gras* can be eaten freshly cooked, served with sauce or fruit, or preserved and served with toast or brioche, ideally accompanied by a sweet white wine such as Sauternes.

Omelette aux truffes *For this luxurious omelet the filling is local black truffles, with more sliced over the top.*

Fattened Toulouse geese, the source of *foie gras*

southwestern dish has to be *cassoulet*, a stew of duck or goose, sausages, pork, and white beans topped with a crust of breadcrumbs; it arouses fierce competition among the dedicated chefs of the region.

Luxury ingredients enhance these basics: walnut oil is added to salads, and slivers of expensive truffles perfume sauces or omelets. Wild mushrooms are eagerly sought in season, and are most delicious cooked simply with garlic, shallots, and parsley. The region is one of the main producers of garlic, which appears studded into meat or served as whole baked heads. The finest fruits include *reines-claudes* (greengages) and the celebrated plums of Agen, which are dried as prunes or added to dishes of rabbit or hare.

THE PYRENEES

From the mountains pastures come beef and lamb of high quality, including Barèges mutton, as well as river trout, and an array of excellent *charcuterie*. Strong cheeses of goat's or ewe's milk are sometimes served with jam made from the black cherries of Itxassou. One of the most popular dishes is *garbure*, a hearty stew of cabbage, bacon, and confit of duck or goose.

Basque cuisine has its own distinct identity, with the red Espelette pepper adding a touch of spice to chorizo, *piperade*, or chipirones (baby squid cooked in their own ink). Succulent Bayonne ham is made from pigs that forage for acorns and chestnuts. Bayonne was also home to the first chocolatiers in France, 17th-century Jewish refugees from the Inquisition, and the town still makes top-quality dark, bitter chocolate.

Fishermen opening oysters at a local maritime festival

ON THE MENU

Cagouilles à la charentaise Snails with sausage meat, herbs, and wine.

Entrecôte à la bordelaise Steak in sauce of red wine, shallots, and bone marrow.

Farçi poitevin Cabbage stuffed with bacon, pork, and sorrel.

Gasconnade Leg of lamb with garlic and anchovy.

Mouclade Mussels in curry sauce, from the spice port of La Rochelle.

Salade landaise Salad of *foie gras*, gizzards, and *confit*.

Ttoro Basque mixed fish and shellfish stew with potatoes, tomatoes, and onions.

Cassoulet *This is a stew of white beans cooked with a variety of sausages and cuts of meat, such as pork or duck.*

Piperade *Eggs are added to a stew of peppers, onions, tomatoes, and garlic, with Bayonne ham laid on top.*

Croustade *Thin pastry is layered with melted butter and apples, perfumed with Armagnac and vanilla.*

France's Wine Regions: Bordeaux

Barrel-making

Bordeaux is the world's largest fine wine region, and, for red wines, certainly the most familiar outside France. Following Henry II's marriage to Eleanor of Aquitaine, three centuries of courtly commerce with England ensured that claret was served at the finest foreign tables. In the 19th century, canny merchants capitalized on this fame and brought fantastic financial prosperity to the region, and with it, the famous 1855 Classification of the Médoc, a league table of châteaux that is still very much in force today.

LOCATOR MAP

🟥 *Bordeaux wine region*

Picking red Merlot grapes at Château Palmer

Cos d'Estournel, *like all the châteaus included in the 1855 league of crus classés ("classed growths"), proudly proclaims the fact on its label.*

WINE REGIONS

The great wine-producing areas of Bordeaux straddle two great rivers; the land between the rivers ("Entre-Deux-Mers") produces lesser, mainly white wines. The rivers, and the river port of Bordeaux itself, have been crucial to the trade in Bordeaux wines; some of the prettiest châteaus line the river banks, enabling easy transportation.

KEY FACTS ABOUT BORDEAUX WINES

Location and Climate

Climatic conditions may vary not only from one year to another, but also within the region itself. The soils tend to be gravelly in the Médoc and Graves, and clayey on the right bank.

Grape Varieties

The five main red grape varieties are ***Cabernet Franc***, ***Cabernet Sauvignon***, ***Merlot, Petit Verdot***, and ***Malbec***. Cabernet Sauvignon is the dominant grape on the west side of the Gironde, Merlot to the east. Most Bordeaux reds are, however, a blend of grapes. ***Sauvignon Blanc*** and ***Sémillon*** are grown and often blended for both dry and sweet whites.

Good Producers

(reds) Latour, Margaux, Haut-Brion, Cos d'Estournel, Léoville Las Cases, Léoville Barton, Lascombes, Pichon Longueville, Pichon Lalande, Lynch-Bages, Palmer, Rausan-Ségla, Duhart Milon, d'Angludet, Léoville Poyferré, Branaire Ducru, Ducru Beaucaillou, Malescot St-Exupéry, Cantemerle, Phélan-Ségur, Chasse-Spleen, Poujeaux, Domaine de Chevalier, Pape Clément, Cheval Blanc, Canon, Pavie, l'Angelus, Troplong Mondot, La Conseillante, Lafleur, Trotanoy.

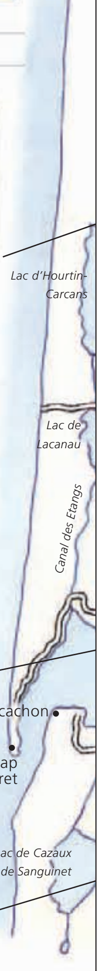
Good Vintages

(reds) 2006, 2005, 2003, 2000, 1998, 1996.

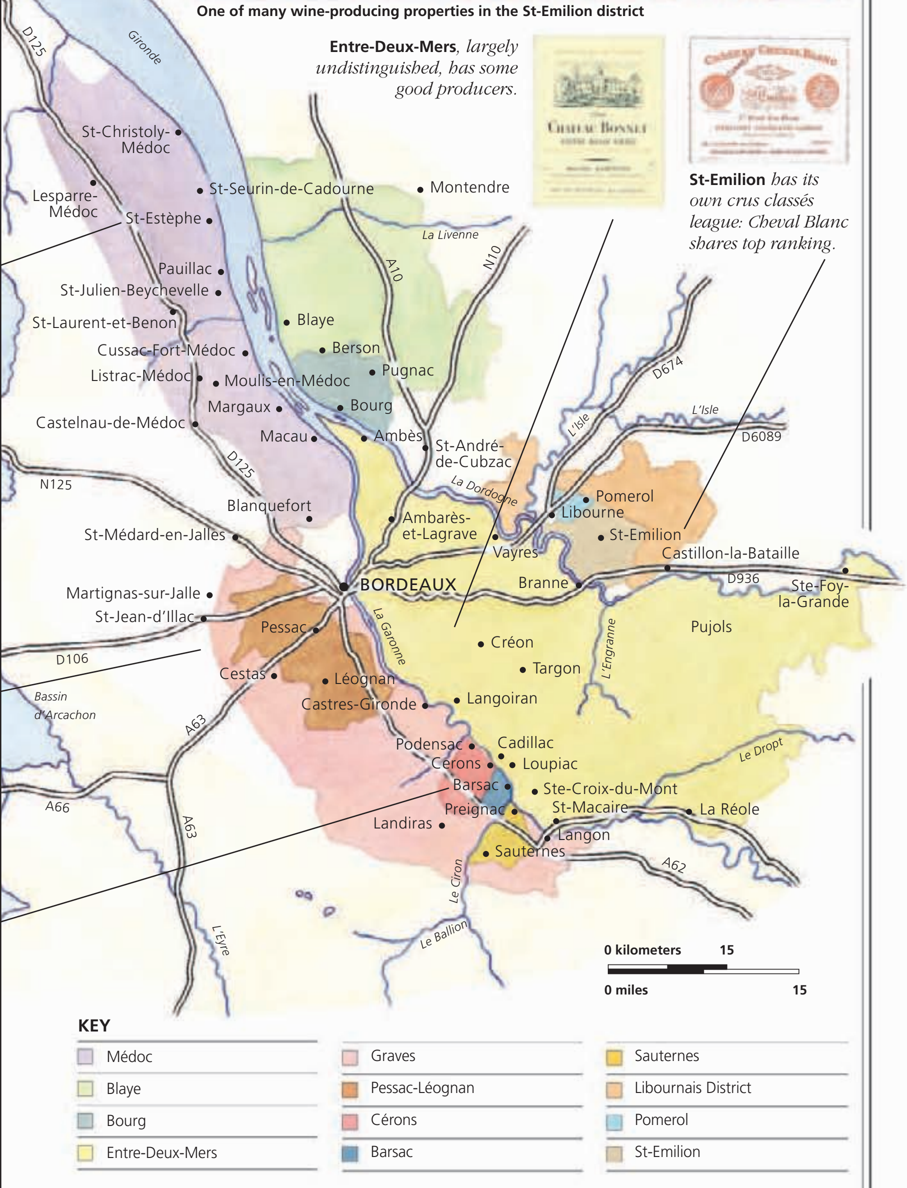
CHATEAU HAUT BRION

Haut-Brion, *in the top division of Bordeaux's Classification, was and still is the single Graves château in this league of Médoc properties.*

The famous legend *that guarantees château-bottling originated in Bordeaux, as a check to unscrupulous merchants.*



One of many wine-producing properties in the St-Emilion district

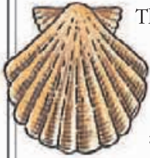


Le Verdon-sur-Mer
Gironde
D125
St-Christoly-Médoc
Lesparre-Médoc
St-Seurin-de-Cadourne
Montendre
St-Estèphe
La Livenne
A10
N10
Pauillac
St-Julien-Beychevelle
St-Laurent-et-Benon
Blaye
Berson
Cussac-Fort-Médoc
Listrac-Médoc
Moulis-en-Médoc
Pugnac
D674
Margaux
Bourg
L'Isle
Castelnau-de-Médoc
Macau
Ambès
St-André-de-Cubzac
D6089
D125
N125
La Dordogne
Pomerol
Libourne
Blanquefort
Ambarès-et-Lagrave
St-Emilion
St-Médard-en-Jalles
Vayres
Castillon-la-Bataille
BORDEAUX
Branne
D936
Ste-Foy-la-Grande
Martignas-sur-Jalle
St-Jean-d'Illac
Pessac
La Garonne
Pujols
D106
Créon
L'Engranne
Cestas
Targon
Bassin d'Arcachon
Léognan
Langoiran
Castres-Gironde
A63
Podensac
Cadillac
Cerons
Loupiac
Le Dropt
Barsac
Ste-Croix-du-Mont
A66
Preignac
St-Macaire
La Réole
Landiras
Langon
A63
Sauternes
A62
Le Ciron
L'Eyre
Le Ballion
0 kilometers 15
0 miles 15
KEY
Médoc
Blaye
Bourg
Entre-Deux-Mers
Graves
Pessac-Léognan
Cérons
Barsac
Sauternes
Libournais District
Pomerol
St-Emilion

Entre-Deux-Mers, *largely undistinguished, has some good producers.*

St-Emilion *has its own crus classés league: Cheval Blanc shares top ranking.*

The Road to Compostela

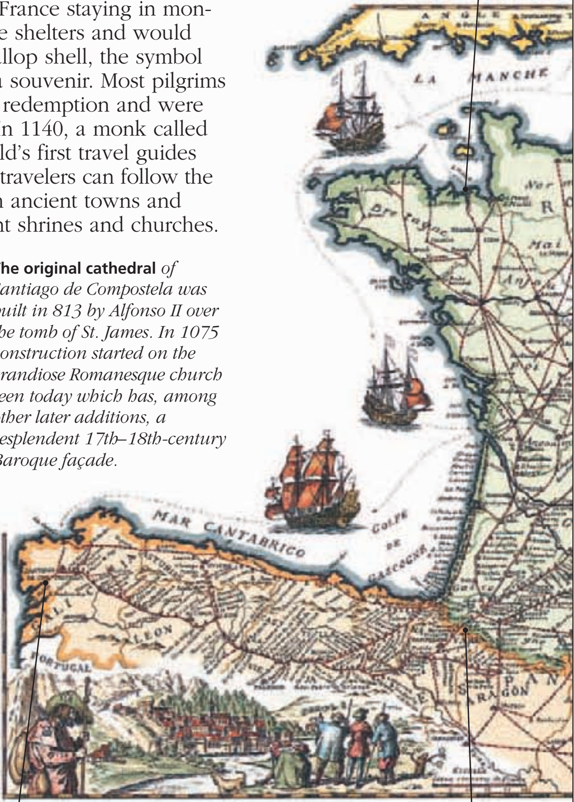


Scallop symbol

Throughout the Middle Ages millions of Christians visited Santiago de Compostela in Spain to pay homage at the shrine of St. James (Santiago). They traveled across France staying in monasteries or simple shelters and would return with a scallop shell, the symbol of St. James, as a souvenir. Most pilgrims went in hope of redemption and were often on the road for years. In 1140, a monk called Picaud wrote one of the world's first travel guides about the pilgrimage. Today, travelers can follow the same routes, passing through ancient towns and villages with their magnificent shrines and churches.

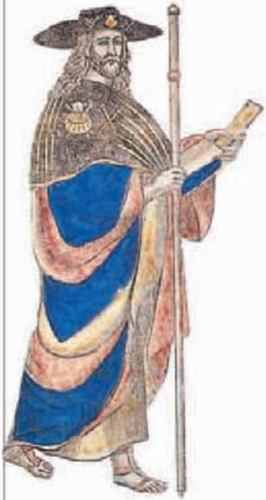
The original cathedral *of Santiago de Compostela was built in 813 by Alfonso II over the tomb of St. James. In 1075 construction started on the grandiose Romanesque church seen today which has, among other later additions, a resplendent 17th–18th-century Baroque façade.*

Foreign pilgrims joined at ports such as St-Malo.

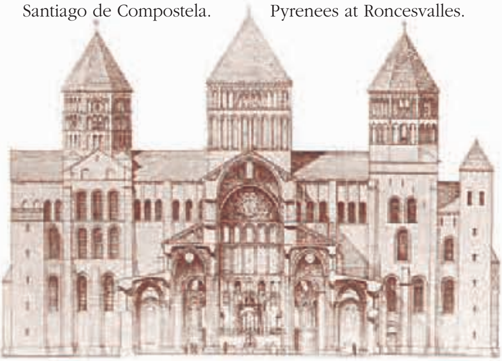


The routes converged on Santiago de Compostela.

Most pilgrims crossed the Pyrenees at Roncesvalles.



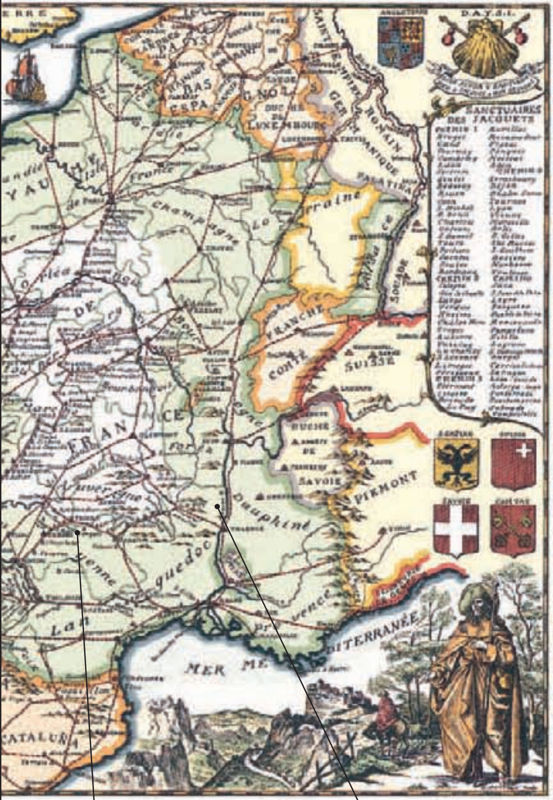
James the Greater, *an apostle, came to Spain to spread the Gospel, according to legend. On his return to Judaea, he was martyred by Herod. His remains were taken to Spain by boat and lay hidden for 800 years.*



The powerful Cluny monastery *in Burgundy* (see pp48–9), *and its affiliated monasteries, played an important role in promoting the pilgrimage. They built shelters and set up churches and shrines housing precious relics, to encourage the pilgrims on their way.*

THE PILGRIMS' WAY

Paris, Vézelay *(see pp336–7)*, Le Puy *(see p364)*, and Arles are the rallying points for the four "official" routes across France. They cross the Pyrenees at Roncesvalles and Somport, and merge at Puente la Reina to form one route, culminating at the shrine on the Galician coast.

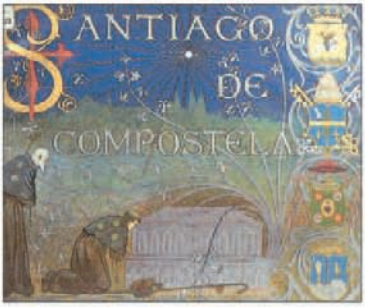


Conques purloined relics to boost its prestige.

Le Puy was a main rallying point for pilgrims.

The reliquary *of Ste-Foy, at Conques, is in one of many elaborate shrines on the way which drew crowds of pilgrims. A saint's relics were thought to have miraculous powers.*

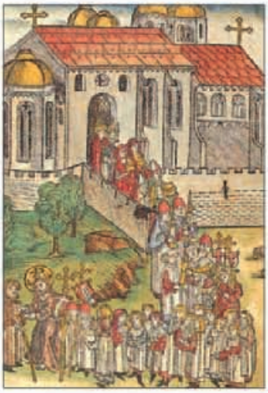
The name *Santiago de Compostela is believed to originate from the Latin* Campus stellae *(field of stars). Legend has it that strange stars were seen hovering over a field in 814 and on July 25, now the feast of Santiago, the saint's remains were found. Subsequent evidence showed that St. James's remains were never in Compostela after all.*



WHAT TO SEE TODAY

Huge Romanesque churches, including Ste-Madeleine at Vézelay *(see p336)*, Ste-Foy at Conques *(pp368–9)*, and St-Sernin at Toulouse *(p447)*, along with many small chapels, were built to accommodate large numbers of pilgrims.

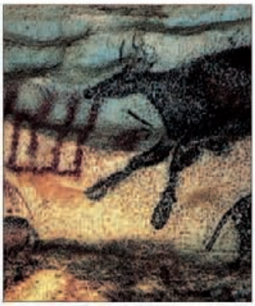
Basilique Ste-Madeleine, Vézelay



The first recorded pilgrim *was the bishop of Le Puy in 951. But pilgrims have probably been coming to Santiago since 814, soon after the saint's tomb was found.*

Caves of the Southwest

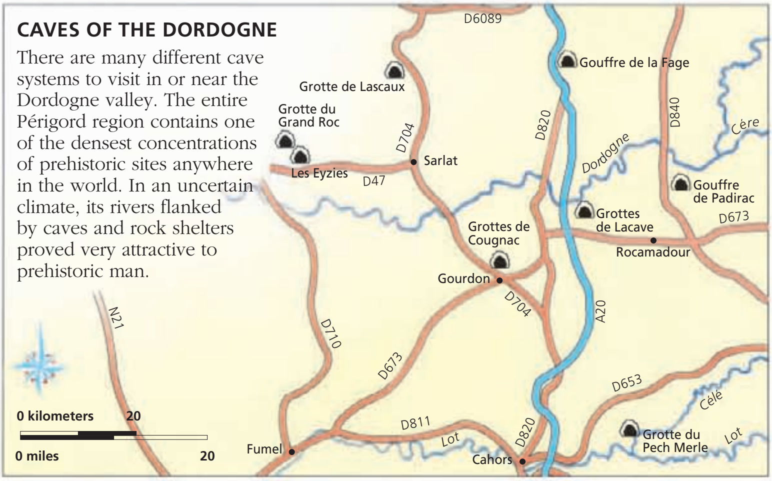
Southwest France is well-known for its spectacular rock formations, created by the slow accumulation of dissolved mineral deposits. Caves and rock shelters exist throughout limestone country in France. But in the foothills of the Pyrenees and the Dordogne they also have something else to offer the visitor: a collection of extraordinary rock paintings, some dating back to the last Ice Age. These art forms were created when prehistoric peoples evolved and began engraving, painting, and carving. This unique artistic tradition lasted for more than 25,000 years, reaching its zenith around 17,000 years ago. Some very fine examples of cave painting are still visible today.



Ancient cave paintings at Lascaux

CAVES OF THE DORDOGNE

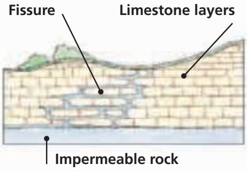
There are many different cave systems to visit in or near the Dordogne valley. The entire Périgord region contains one of the densest concentrations of prehistoric sites anywhere in the world. In an uncertain climate, its rivers flanked by caves and rock shelters proved very attractive to prehistoric man.


D6089
Gouffre de la Fage
Grotte de Lascaux
Grotte du Grand Roc
D704
D820
D840
Cère
Dordogne
Sarlat
Les Eyzies
D47
Gouffre de Padirac
Grottes de Lacave
D673
Grottes de Cougnac
Rocamadour
Gourdon
D704
A20
N21
D710
D673
D653
Célé
0 kilometers 20
0 miles 20
D811
Lot
D820
Grotte du Pech Merle
Lot
Fumel
Cahors

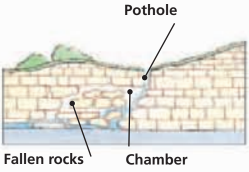
CAVE FORMATION

Limestone is laid down in layers containing fissures that allow water to penetrate beneath the surface. Over thousands of years, the water slowly dissolves the rock, first forming potholes and then larger caverns. Stalactites develop where water drips from the cave roof; stalagmites grow upward from the floor.

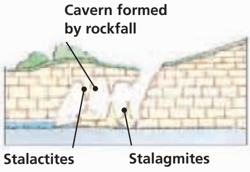
Grotte du Grand Roc in the Vézère valley, Périgord


Fissure
Limestone layers
Impermeable rock

1 Water percolates through fissures, slowly dissolving the surrounding rock.

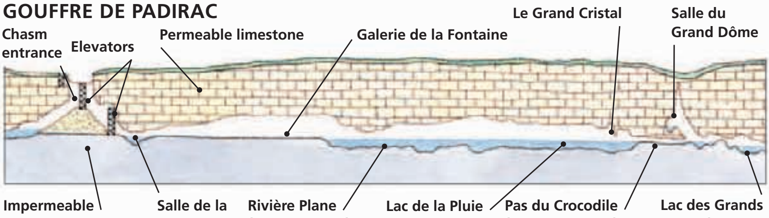

Pothole
Fallen rocks
Chamber

2 The water produces potholes and loosens surrounding rocks, which gradually fall away.

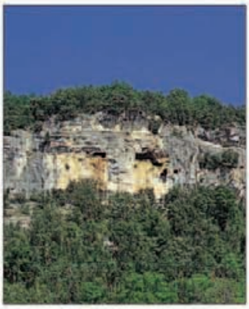

Cavern formed by rockfall
Stalactites
Stalagmites

3 Dripping water containing dissolved limestone forms stalactites and stalagmites.

GOUFFRE DE PADIRAC


Chasm entrance
Elevators
Permeable limestone
Galerie de la Fontaine
Le Grand Cristal
Salle du Grand Dôme
Impermeable rock
Salle de la Fontaine
Rivière Plane (Smooth River)
Lac de la Pluie (Rain Lake)
Pas du Crocodile (Crocodile Track)
Lac des Grands Gours (Great Barrier Lake)

Underground river and chambers of the Gouffre de Padirac



Prehistoric caves at Les Eyzies

VISITING THE CAVES

Cougnac contains chasms ("gouffres") and galleries and its prehistoric paintings include human figures. Around **Les Eyzies** *(see pp434–5)* are the caves of **Les Combarelles**, and **Font de Gaume**, which have beautiful prehistoric paintings, drawings and engravings, as does **Rouffignac** in its network of caves. **Grand Roc** has chambers containing a profusion of stalactites and stalagmites. Northeast of Les Eyzies is the rock shelter of **L'Abri du Cap Blanc**, with its rare frieze of horses and bison dating from around 14,000 years ago.

On the south bank of the Dordogne, an underground river and lake with extraordinary rock formations can be seen at **Lacave**. The gigantic chasm and caverns at **Padirac** *(p438)* are even more spectacular. The caves at **Lascaux** with the finest prehistoric paintings have been closed but the exceptional replica at **Lascaux II** *(p434)* is well worth seeing. Farther south, **Pech-Merle's** caverns *(p438)* have impressive rock formations. **Niaux**, in the foothills of the Pyrenees, can also be visited.

THE STORY OF CAVE ART

The first prehistoric cave paintings in Europe were discovered in northwest Spain in 1879. Since then, over 200 decorated caves and rock shelters have been found in Spain and France, mainly in the Dordogne region. A wide range of clues, from stone lamps to miraculously preserved footprints, has helped prehistorians to work out the techniques the cave artists used. But their motives are still not clear. Nearly all the paintings are of animals, with few humans, and many of them are in inaccessible underground chambers. The paintings undoubtedly had a symbolic or magical significance; a new theory suggests they were the work of shamans.

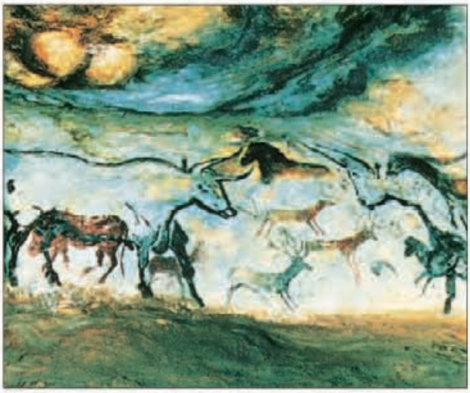
The techniques *used by Ice Age artists, who worked by lamplight, included cutting outlines into soft rock, using natural contours as part of the design. Black lines and shading were produced by charcoal, while color washes were applied with mineral pigments such as kaolin and haematite. Hand silhouettes were made by sucking up diluted pigment and blowing it through a plant stem to form a fine spray. When the hand was removed from the rock, its eerie shape was left behind.*

Decorated stone lamp discovered in Lascaux cave

Kaolin

Charcoal

Haematite



The Great Bull from the Hall of Bulls frieze at Lascaux

POITOU AND AQUITAINE

DEUX-SÈVRES · VIENNE · CHARENTE-MARITIME
CHARENTE · GIRONDE · LANDES

This vast area of southwest France spans a quarter of the country's windswept Atlantic coastline, a great expanse of fine sandy beaches. The region stretches from the marshes of the Marais Poitevin to the great pine forests of the Landes. Central to it is the celebrated wine region of Bordeaux and its great châteaus.

The turbulent history of Poitou and Aquitaine, fought over for centuries, has left a rich architectural and cultural heritage. The great arch and amphitheater at Saintes bear witness to Roman influence in the area. In the Middle Ages, the pilgrimage route to Santiago de Compostela *(see pp400–1)* created an impressive legacy of Romanesque churches, such as those at Poitiers and Parthenay, as well as tiny chapels and glowing frescoes. The Hundred Years' War *(see pp52–3)* caused great upheaval but also resulted in the construction of mighty defense keeps by the English Plantagenet kings. As a result of the Wars of Religion *(see pp54–5)*, many towns, churches, and châteaus were destroyed and had to be rebuilt.

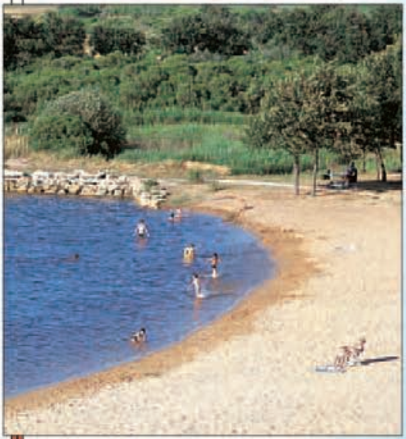
Present-day Poitiers is a big, thriving commercial centre. To the west are the historic ports of La Rochelle and Rochefort. Farther south, the wine-producing district of Bordeaux combines with Cognac, famous for its brandy, to supply an important part of the region's income. The city of Bordeaux is as prosperous today as in Roman times, combining a lively cultural scene with elegant 18th-century architecture. Its wines complement the region's cuisine: lampreys, mussels, and oysters from the coast; and salty lamb and goat's cheeses from the inland pastures.

Shuttered houses in St-Martin-de-Ré, on Ile de Ré, off the coast of La Rochelle

◁ **The seaside resort of Arcachon by the sandy dunes of the Bassin d'Arcachon**

Exploring Poitou and Aquitaine

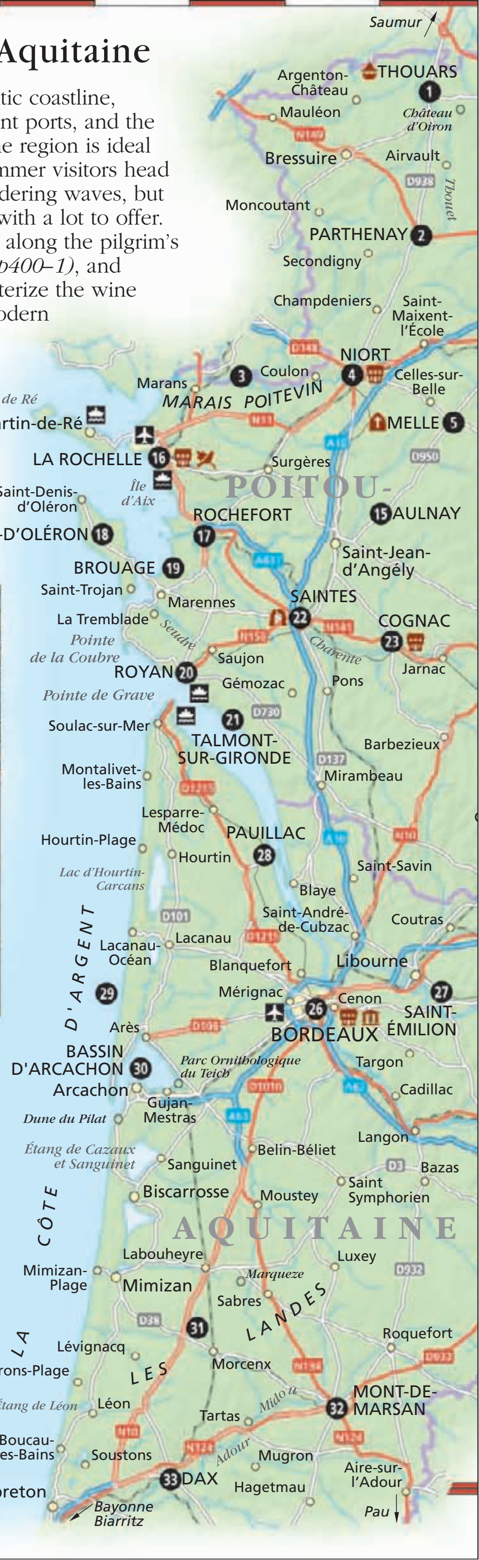
Blessed with a seemingly endless Atlantic coastline, abundant navigable waterways, excellent ports, and the finest wine and brandy in the world, the region is ideal for a relaxing vacation. Today most summer visitors head straight for the beaches with their thundering waves, but there is also a lush countryside inland with a lot to offer. Fine medieval architecture can be seen along the pilgrim's route to Santiago de Compostela *(see pp400–1)*, and châteaus of all shapes and sizes characterize the wine districts around Bordeaux. The only modern city of major importance in the region, Bordeaux is worth a visit for its elegant 18th-century architecture as well as for its rich cultural life. The vast man-made forest of Les Landes also adds to this greatly undervalued corner of France.



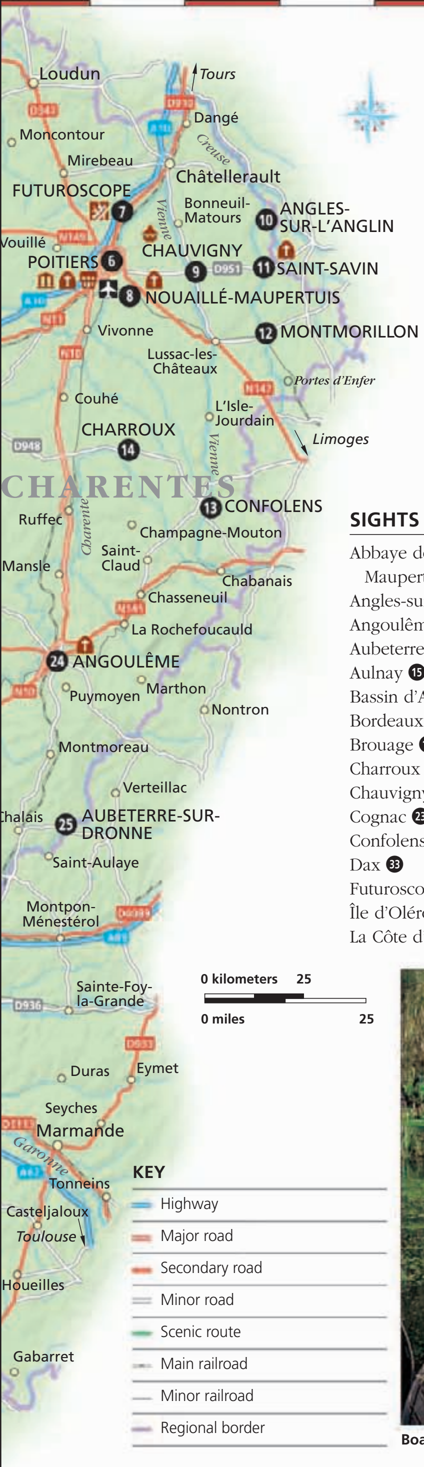
Beachlife in Bassin d'Arcachon on the Côte d'Argent

GETTING AROUND

The region's main highway is the A10 connecting Paris and Poitiers with Bordeaux and points east, such as Toulouse, west to Rochefort, and south to Bayonne and Spain. This road carries most of the area's heavy traffic, relieving the excellent smaller roads. Bordeaux can be reached by TGV direct from Lille (Eurostar interchange), and the Paris–Poitiers–Angoulême–Bordeaux TGV line has halved rail travel times (Paris–Bordeaux 3¼ hr). Bordeaux, Poitiers and La Rochelle have international airports (direct flights to UK), and Bordeaux also has long-distance bus services to most European capitals. Poitiers has buses to nearby towns.


Saumur
Argenton-Château
THOUARS ①
Mauléon
Château d'Oiron
Bressuire
Airvault
Thouet
Moncoutant
PARTHENAY ②
Secondigny
Champdeniers
Saint-Maixent-l'École
NIORT ④
Coulon ③
Celles-sur-Belle
Marans
MARAIS POITEVIN
Île de Ré
Saint-Martin-de-Ré
MELLE ⑤
LA ROCHELLE ⑯
Surgères
POITOU-
Île d'Aix
Saint-Denis-d'Oléron
ROCHEFORT ⑰
AULNAY ⑮
ÎLE-D'OLÉRON ⑱
Saint-Jean-d'Angély
BROUAGE ⑲
Saint-Trojan
Marennes
SAINTES ㉒
COGNAC ㉓
La Tremblade
Seudre
Charente
Pointe de la Coubre
Saujon
Jarnac
ROYAN ⑳
Pons
Gémozac
Pointe de Grave
Soulac-sur-Mer
TALMONT-SUR-GIRONDE ㉑
Barbezieux
Mirambeau
Montalivet-les-Bains
Lesparre-Médoc
PAUILLAC ㉘
Hourtin-Plage
Hourtin
Saint-Savin
Lac d'Hourtin-Carcans
Blaye
Saint-André-de-Cubzac
Coutras
Lacanau-Océan
Lacanau
Libourne
Blanquefort
Mérignac
㉙
Cenon
BORDEAUX ㉖
SAINT-ÉMILION ㉗
Arès
Parc Ornithologique du Teich
BASSIN D'ARCACHON ㉚
Targon
Arcachon
Gujan-Mestras
Cadillac
Dune du Pilat
Langon
Étang de Cazaux et Sanguinet
Belin-Béliet
Sanguinet
Bazas
Biscarrosse
Moustey
Saint Symphorien
CÔTE D'ARGENT
AQUITAINE
Labouheyre
Luxey
Mimizan-Plage
Mimizan
Marqueze
Sabres
LES LANDES
㉛
Roquefort
LA
Lévignacq
Morcenx
Saint-Girons-Plage
MONT-DE-MARSAN ㉜
Étang de Léon
Léon
Midou
Tartas
Vieux-Boucau-les-Bains
Adour
Soustons
Mugron
Aire-sur-l'Adour
DAX ㉝
Hagetmau
Capbreton
Bayonne
Biarritz
Pau

For additional map symbols *see back flap*


Loudun
Tours
D347
D910
Dangé
Moncontour
A10
Creuse
Mirebeau
Châtellerault
FUTUROSCOPE
7
Vienne
Bonneuil-Matours
10
ANGLES-SUR-L'ANGLIN
Vouillé
N149
POITIERS
6
CHAUVIGNY
9
D951
11
SAINT-SAVIN
A10
8
NOUAILLÉ-MAUPERTUIS
N11
Vivonne
12
MONTMORILLON
N10
Lussac-les-Châteaux
N147
Portes d'Enfer
Couhé
L'Isle-Jourdain
CHARROUX
14
Limoges
D948
Vienne
CHARENTES
13
CONFOLENS
Ruffec
Charente
Champagne-Mouton
Saint-Claud
Mansle
Chabanais
Chasseneuil
N141
La Rochefoucauld
24
ANGOULÊME
N10
Puymoyen
Marthon
Nontron
Montmoreau
Verteillac
Chalais
25
AUBETERRE-SUR-DRONNE
Saint-Aulaye
Montpon-Ménestérol
D6089
A89
Sainte-Foy-la-Grande
D936
D933
Duras
Eymet
Seyches
D813
Marmande
Garonne
A62
Tonneins
Casteljaloux
Toulouse
Houeilles
Gabarret
0 kilometers 25
0 miles 25
KEY
Highway
Major road
Secondary road
Minor road
Scenic route
Main railroad
Minor railroad
Regional border

One of the Ile de Ré's picturesque harbors

SIGHTS AT A GLANCE

- Abbaye de Nouaillé-Maupertuis ⑧
- Angles-sur-l'Anglin ⑩
- Angoulême ㉔
- Aubeterre-sur-Dronne ㉕
- Aulnay ⑮
- Bassin d'Arcachon ㉚
- Bordeaux ㉖
- Brouage ⑲
- Charroux ⑭
- Chauvigny ⑨
- Cognac ㉓
- Confolens ⑬
- Dax ㉝
- Futuroscope ⑦
- Île d'Oléron ⑱
- La Côte d'Argent ㉙
- La Rochelle ⑯
- Les Landes ㉛
- Marais Poitevin ③
- Melle ⑤
- Mont-de-Marsan ㉜
- Montmorillon ⑫
- Niort ④
- Parthenay ②
- Pauillac ㉘
- Poitiers ⑥
- Rochefort ⑰
- Royan ⑳
- Saintes ㉒
- St-Émilion ㉗
- St-Savin ⑪
- Talmont-sur-Gironde ㉑
- Thouars ①

Boats moored at Coulon in the Marais Poitevin

Rose window of St-Médard, Thouars

Thouars ❶

Deux-Sèvres. 👥 *10,500.* 🚉 🚌 ℹ *3 bis bd Pierre Curie (05 49 66 17 65).* ⛺ *Tue & Fri.* **www**.pays-thouarsais.com

Thouars, on a rocky outcrop surrounded by the river Thouet, is on the border between Anjou and Poitou. There are as many roofs of northern slate as of southern red tiles.

In the center stands **Eglise St-Médard**. Its Romanesque façade is a perfect example of the Poitevin style that is typical of the region *(see p412)*, although a splendid Gothic rose window has been added. Lined with half-timbered medieval houses, the rue du Château leads up to the 17th-century château which dominates the town. It now houses a school, and is open to the public during the summer.

East of Thouars lies the moated **Château d'Oiron**, which now hosts contemporary art exhibitions. A masterpiece of Renaissance architecture, it was largely built from 1518–49.

⌂ Château d'Oiron
79100 Oiron. ***Tel*** *05 49 96 51 25.*
○ *daily.* ● *some public hols.* ♿

Parthenay ❷

Deux-Sèvres. 👥 *11,000.* 🚉 🚌 ℹ *8 rue de la Vau-St-Jacques (05 49 64 24 24).* ⛺ *Wed.* **www**.cc-parthenay.fr

Parthenay is a classic, sleepy provincial town, except on Wednesday mornings, when France's second biggest livestock market is held here. In the Middle Ages, the town was an important halt on the route to Santiago de Compostela *(see pp400–1)* and it is easy to imagine the processions of pilgrims in the medieval quarter. Steep and cobbled, rue de la Vau-St-Jacques winds up to the 13th-century ramparts, leading on from the fortified Porte St-Jacques which guards a 13th-century bridge over the river Thouet.

West of Parthenay, the 12th-century church of **St-Pierre de Parthenay-le-Vieux** has a splendid Poitevin façade, featuring Samson and the Lion and a cavalier with a falcon.

Medieval houses lining the cobbled rue de la Vau-St-Jacques in Parthenay

Marais Poitevin ❸

Charente-Maritime, Deux-Sèvres, Vendée. ✈ *La Rochelle.* 🚉 *Niort, La Rochelle.* 🚌 *Coulon, Arçais, Marans.* ℹ *31 rue Gabriel Auchier, Coulon (05 49 35 99 29).* **www**.parc-marais-poitevin.fr

The Poitevin marshes, which have been slowly drained with canals, dikes, and sluices for a thousand years, cover about 197,000 acres (80,000 hectares) between Niort and the sea. The area is now a regional park, divided into two parts. To the north and south of the Sèvre estuary is the Marais Désséché (dry marsh), where cereal and other crops are grown. The huge swathe of the Marais Mouillé (wet marsh) is upstream toward Niort.

The wet marshes, known as the Venise Verte (Green Venice), are the most interesting. They are crisscrossed by a labyrinth of weed-choked canals, adorned by waterlilies and irises, shaded by poplars and beeches, and support a rich variety of birds and other wildlife. The *maraîchins* who live here stoutly maintain that much of the huge, waterlogged forest is unexplored. The picturesque whitewashed villages hereabouts are all built on higher ground, and the customary means of transportation is a flat-bottomed boat, known as a *platte*.

Coulon, St-Hilaire-la-Palud, La Garette and Arçais, as well as Damvix and Maillezais in the Vendée, are all convenient starting points for boat trips

Flat-bottomed boats moored at Coulon in the Marais Poitevin

around the marshes. Boats can be rented with or without a guide. Make sure you bring plenty of insect repellent.

Coulon is the largest and best equipped village, and a popular base for visiting the area. **La Maison des Marais Mouillés**, located in the old toll house, presents an account of life in the marshes in times gone by, along with details of the wetlands' flora and fauna.

The Plantagenet donjon in Niort, now housing a local museum

Niort ④

Deux-Sèvres. 👥 *60,000.* 🚉 🚌 **i** *16 rue du Petit St-Jean (05 49 24 18 79).* ⛱ *Thu & Sat.* **www**.niortourisme.com

Once a medieval port by the green waters of the Sèvre, Niort is now a prosperous industrial town specializing in machine tools, electronics, chemicals, and insurance.

Its closeness to the marshes is evident in local specialties – eels, snails, and angelica. This herb has been cultivated in the wetlands for centuries and is used for anything from liqueur to ice cream.

The town's immediate attraction is the huge 12th-century donjon overlooking the Vieux Pont. Built by Henry II and Richard the Lion-Heart, it played an important role during the Hundred Years' War and was later used as a prison. One prisoner was the father of Madame de Maintenon *(see p56)*, who spent her childhood in Niort. The donjon is now a museum of local arts and crafts and archeology. The **Musée d'Agesci** in avenue de Limoges exhibits ceramics, sculpture, and paintings from the 16th to 20th centuries.

Environs

Halfway to Poitiers is the small town of **St-Maixent-L'Ecole**. A marvel of light and space, its abbey church is a Flamboyant Gothic reconstruction by François Le Duc (1670) of a building destroyed during the Wars of Religion. Farther west, the **Tumulus de Bougon** consists of five tumuli (burial mounds), the oldest dating from 4500 BC.

Melle ⑤

Deux-Sèvres. 👥 *4,000.* 🚌 **i** *rue E Traver (05 49 29 15 10).* ⛱ *Fri.*

A Roman silver mine was the origin of Melle, which in the 9th century had the only mint in Aquitaine. Later its fame derived from the *baudet du Poitou,* an especially sturdy mule bred in the area. Now Melle is better known for its churches, of which the finest is **St-Hilaire**. Built in a delightful riverside setting, it has a 12th-century Poitevin façade with an equestrian statue of the Emperor Constantine above the north door.

Environs

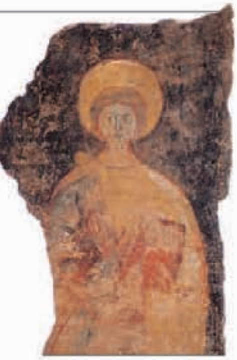
To the northwest, the abbey in **Celles-sur-Belle** has a great Moorish doorway which contrasts strongly with the rest of the church, a 17th-century restoration in Gothic style.

Equestrian statue of Constantine on the façade of St-Hilaire, Melle

Canal in the Venise Verte region of the Marais Poitevin ▷

Poitiers ❻

Three of the greatest battles in French history were fought around Poitiers, the most famous in 732 when Charles Martel halted the Arab invasion. After two periods of English rule *(see p51)* the town thrived during the reign of Jean de Berry (1369–1416), the great sponsor of the arts. Its university, founded in 1431, made Poitiers a major intellectual center and saw Rabelais among its students. The Wars of Religion left Poitiers in chaos and not until the late 19th century did any major development take place. Today, however, the town is a modern and dynamic regional capital with a rich architectural heritage in its historic center.



Fresco in Eglise St-Hilaire-le-Grand

⛪ Notre-Dame-la-Grande

Despite its name, Notre-Dame-la-Grande is not a large church. One of Poitiers' great pilgrim churches, it is most celebrated as a masterpiece of lively 12th-century Poitevin sculpture, notably its richly detailed façade. In the choir is a Romanesque fresco of Christ and the Virgin. Most of the chapels were added in the Renaissance.

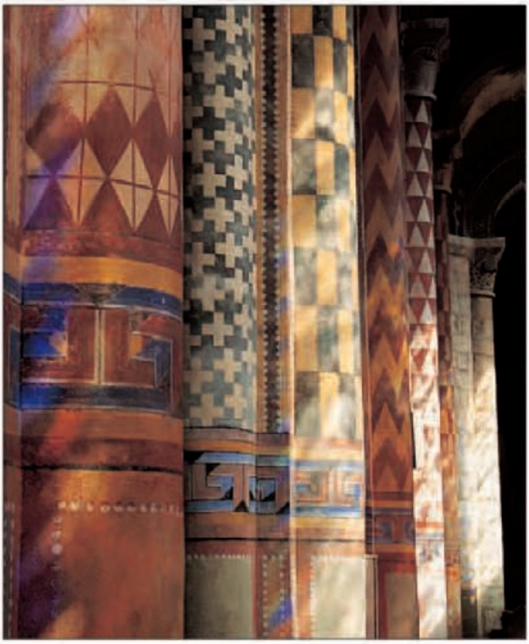
🏛 Palais de Justice

Pl Alphonse Lepetit. ***Tel*** *05 49 50 22 00.* ○ *Mon–Fri.*

Behind the bland Renaissance façade is the 12th-century great hall of the palace of the Angevin kings, Henry II and Richard the Lion-Heart. This is thought to be the scene of Joan of Arc's examination by a council of theologians in 1429.

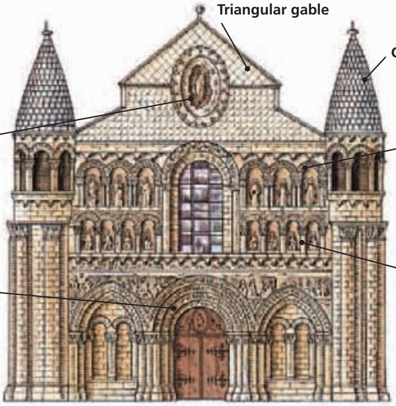
⛪ Cathédrale St-Pierre

The 13th-century carved choir stalls in St-Pierre are by far the oldest in France. Note the huge 12th-century east window showing the Crucifixion. The



Pillars with colorful geometrical patterns in Notre-Dame-la-Grande

NOTRE-DAME-LA-GRANDE



Triangular gable

Cone-shaped pinnacles

Christ in Majesty is shown in the center of the gable, surrounded by symbols of the evangelists.

Blind arcading is a distinctive feature of the Poitevin façade.

The 12 apostles are represented by statues in the arcatures, together with the first bishop St-Hilaire and his disciple St-Martin.

The portals on the Poitevin façade are deep and richly sculpted, often showing a pronounced Moorish influence.

tiny figures of the cathedral's patrons (Henry II and Eleanor of Aquitaine) are crouched at the foot of the window. Its organ (1787–91), made by François-Henri Cliquot, is one of the most prestigious and beautiful in Europe.

🏛 Espace Mendès France

1 pl de la Cathédrale. ***Tel*** *05 49 50 33 08.* ○ *Tue–Fri (Sat–Mon pm only).* ♿

This museum contains a state-of-the-art planetarium, complete with laser shows to help explain the mysteries of the universe, plus regular events and exhibitions.

⛪ Eglise St-Hilaire-le-Grand

Fires and reconstructions have made St-Hilaire a mosaic of different styles. With its origins in the 6th century, the church still displays an 11th-century belltower and a 12th-century nave.

⛪ Baptistère St-Jean

Rue Jean Jaurès.

○ *Wed–Mon.* ♿

The polygonal 4th-century Baptistère St-Jean is one of the oldest Christian buildings in France. Many of the earliest converts were baptized here. Now a museum, it contains Romanesque frescoes of Christ and Emperor Constantine, and some Merovingian sarcophagi.

🏛 Musée Sainte-Croix

3 bis rue Jean Jaurès. ***Tel*** *05 49 41 07 53.* ○ *Tue–Fri (Sat–Mon pm only).* ● *some public hols.* ♿

Musée Sainte-Croix exhibits prehistoric, Gallo-Roman, and medieval archeology, and a wide range of paintings and 19th-century sculpture. Five bronzes by Camille Claudel are on show, including *La Valse*. There is also a large collection of contemporary art.

🏛 Médiathèque François Mitterrand

4 rue de l'Université. ***Tel*** *05 49 52 31 51.* ○ *Tue–Sat.* ● *public hols.*

This modern building, in the historic quarter, is home to the **Maison du Moyen Age**, which displays a collection of medieval manuscripts, maps, and engravings.

VISITORS' CHECKLIST

Vienne. 👥 *91,000.* ✈ *3 miles (5 km) W Poitiers.* 🚆 🚌

ℹ *45 pl Charles de Gaulle (05 49 41 21 24).* 🛒 *Sat, Tue & Thu.*

🎭 *Concerts Allumés (end Sep–beg Oct).* **www**.ot-poitiers.fr

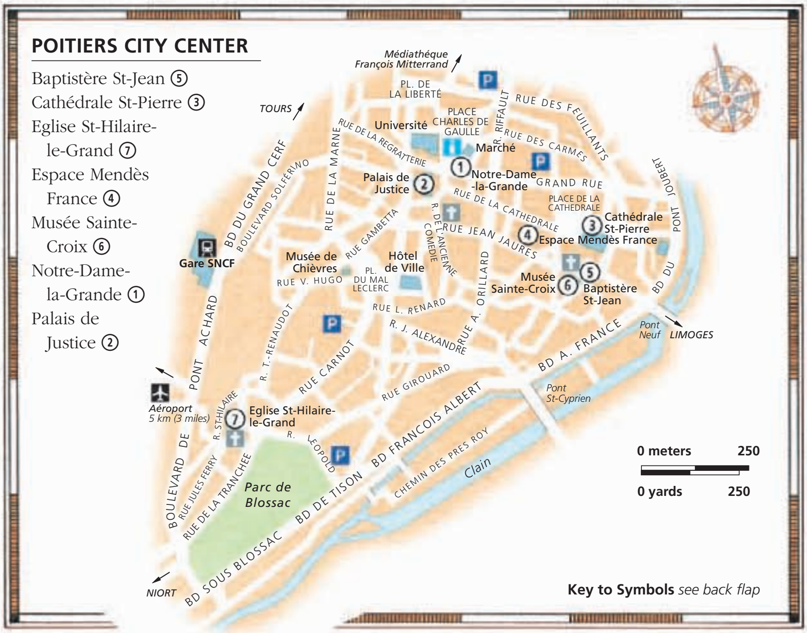
One of Futuroscope's most popular attractions: the large-screen cinema

Futuroscope ❼

Jaunay-Clan. 🚆 ***Tel*** *05 49 49 30 80.* ○ *daily.* ● *Jan.* ♿ 🍴 🛍

www.futuroscope.com

Futuroscope is a fantastic theme park 4.5 miles (7 km) north of Poitiers, exploring visual technology in a futuristic environment. Attractions evolve yearly and include simulators, 3D and 360° screens and the "magic carpet" cinema, with one of its screens on the floor, creating the sensation of "flying." The cinema has the biggest screen in Europe.


POITIERS CITY CENTER
Baptistère St-Jean ⑤
Cathédrale St-Pierre ③
Eglise St-Hilaire-le-Grand ⑦
Espace Mendès France ④
Musée Sainte-Croix ⑥
Notre-Dame-la-Grande ①
Palais de Justice ②
Médiathèque François Mitterrand
PL. DE LA LIBERTÉ
TOURS
RUE DES FEUILLANTS
R. RIFFAULT
PLACE CHARLES DE GAULLE
Université
RUE DE LA REGRATTERIE
RUE DES CARMES
Marché
Notre-Dame-la-Grande
GRAND RUE
PLACE DE LA CATHÉDRALE
Palais de Justice
RUE DE LA MARNE
BD DU GRAND CERF
BOULEVARD SOLFERINO
RUE DE LA CATHÉDRALE
Cathédrale St-Pierre
PONT JOUBERT
RUE JEAN JAURES
Espace Mendès France
R. DE L'ANCIENNE COMÉDIE
RUE GAMBETTA
Gare SNCF
Musée de Chièvres
Hôtel de Ville
PL. DU MAL LECLERC
RUE V. HUGO
RUE A. ORILLARD
Musée Sainte-Croix
Baptistère St-Jean
BD DU
RUE L. RENARD
R. J. ALEXANDRE
PONT ACHARD
R. T.-RENAUDOT
RUE CARNOT
BD A. FRANCE
Pont Neuf
LIMOGES
Aéroport 5 km (3 miles)
RUE GIROUARD
Pont St-Cyprien
R. ST-HILAIRE
Eglise St-Hilaire-le-Grand
R. LÉOPOLD
BD FRANCOIS ALBERT
BOULEVARD DE
RUE JULES FERRY
RUE DE LA TRANCHEE
Parc de Blossac
BD DE TISON
CHEMIN DES PRES ROY
Clain
0 meters 250
0 yards 250
NIORT
BD SOUS BLOSSAC

Key to Symbols *see back flap*

The castle ruins of Angles-sur-l'Anglin with the old watermill in the foreground

Abbaye de Nouaillé-Maupertuis ⑧

Nouaillé-Maupertuis. ***Tel*** *05 49 55 35 69.* ***Church*** ○ *9am–6pm (5pm in winter).* ♿ *limited.* 🗣 *summer only.*

On the banks of the river Miosson lies the Abbaye de Nouaillé-Maupertuis. First mentioned in 780, the abbey became independent in 808 and followed the Benedictine rule. Apart from the beauty of the site, it is also worth visiting the church, built in the 11th–12th centuries and reconstructed several times. Behind the altar is the 10th-century sarcophagus of St-Junien, with three great heraldic eagles carved on the front.

More interesting is the nearby battlefield, scene of the great English victory at Poitiers by the Black Prince in 1356. The view has altered little in 600 years. Drive down the small road to La Cardinerie (to the right off the D142), which leads to the river crossing at Gué de l'Omme, the epicenter of the battle. There is a monument halfway up the hill where the heaviest fighting took place and where the French king Jean le Bon was isolated and captured. He had put up a heroic single-handed resistance with nothing but his battle-axe and his small son Philippe to tell him where the next English knight was coming from.

Chauvigny ⑨

Vienne. 👥 *7,000.* 🚌 ℹ *5 rue St-Pierre (05 49 46 39 01).* ⛀ *Tue, Thu, Sat.* **www**.chauvigny.fr

Chauvigny, on its steep promontory overlooking the broad river Vienne, displays the ruins of no fewer than four fortified medieval castles. Stone from the local quarry was so plentiful that nobody ever bothered to demolish earlier castles for building material.

Nevertheless, the best thing in this town is the 11th–12th-century **Eglise St-Pierre**, whose decorated capitals are a real treasure – particularly those in the choir. The carvings represent biblical scenes along with monsters, sphinxes, and sirens. Look for the one which says *Gofridus me fecit* (Gofridus made me), with wonderfully natural scenes of the Epiphany.

Monster capitals in Eglise St-Pierre in Chauvigny

Environs

Nearby is the lovely **Château de Touffou**, a Renaissance dream on the banks of the Vienne, with terraces and hanging gardens. Just north of it is the sleepy village of **Bonneuil-Matours**, with fine choir stalls in its Romanesque church.

⌂ Château de Touffou
Bonnes. ***Tel*** *05 49 56 08 48.*
○ *mid-Jun–mid-Sep: Wed–Sat, Mon; mid-Sep–mid-Jun: by appointment only.* 🗣

Angles-sur-l'Anglin ⑩

Vienne. 👥 *400.* ℹ *14 la Place (05 49 48 86 87).* ⛀ *Sat & Sun.* **www**.anglessuranglin.com

The village of Angles lies in an extremely beautiful riverside setting, dominated by its castle ruins. Adding to the charm is an old watermill by the slow-running river Anglin, graced by waterlilies and swaying reeds. Try to avoid visiting in summer, since the narrow streets become too crowded for comfort.

Angles is also famous for its tradition of fine needlework, the *jours d'Angles*, which is determinedly maintained by the local women today (their workshops can be visited).

St-Savin ⑪

Vienne. 👥 *1,000.* 🚌 ℹ *20 pl de la Libération (05 49 48 11 00).* 🛒 *Fri.* **www**.abbaye-saint-savin.fr

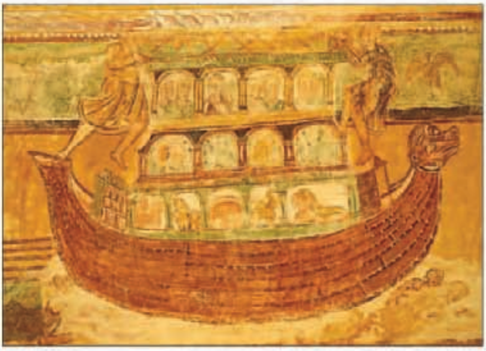
The glory of St-Savin is its 11th-century abbey church with its slender Gothic spire and huge nave.

The abbey had enormous influence until the Hundred Years' War, when it was burned down. It was later pillaged several times during the Wars of Religion. Despite restoration work by monks in the 17th century and again in the 19th century, the church appears quite untouched.

Its interior contains the most magnificent series of 12th-century Romanesque frescoes in Europe. These wall paintings were among the very first in France to be classified as a *Monument Historique* in 1836. Some of the frescoes were restored in 1967–74 and since 1983 they have been protected by UNESCO. A full-scale replica of the St-Savin murals can be seen at the Palais de Chaillot in Paris *(see pp110–11)*. The abbey-museum explains the historical context and techniques of the murals.

ST-SAVIN WALL PAINTINGS

The frescoes of St-Savin represent Old Testament history from the Creation to the Ten Commandments. The sequence starts to the left of the entrance with the Creation of the stars and of Eve. It continues with scenes from Noah's Ark to the Tower of Babel, the story of Joseph, and the parting of the Red Sea. It is believed that all the frescoes were created by the same group of artists, due to the similarity in style. Their harmonious colors – red and yellow ocher, green, black, and white – have been softened by time.



Noah's Ark, from a 12th-century wall painting in St-Savin

Belltower of St-Savin

Montmorillon ⑫

Vienne. 👥 *7,000.* 🚌 ℹ *2 pl du Maréchal Leclerc (05 49 91 11 96).* 🛒 *Wed.*

Montmorillon, built on both banks of the calm river Gartempe, has its origins in the 11th century. Like most towns in the region it had a difficult time during the Hundred Years' War and the Wars of Religion. Some buildings survived, such as **Eglise Notre-Dame**, which has beautiful frescoes in its 12th-century crypt (contact tourist office for key). They include scenes from the life of St. Catherine of Alexandria.

Environs

Half an hour's walk from the Pont de Chez Ragon, south of Montmorillon, is the **Portes d'Enfer**, a dramatically shaped rock above the sudden rapids of the Gartempe.

Confolens ⑬

Charente. 👥 *3,000.* 🚌 ℹ *pl Henri Desaphie (05 45 84 22 22).* 🛒 *Wed & Sat.*

On the border with Limousin, Confolens was once an important frontier town with several churches, but now suffers from rural exodus. Efforts to prevent the town's isolation include the annual international folklore festival. Every August the town is transformed into a tumultuous mix of music, costumes, and crafts from all over the world.

Of historical interest is the medieval bridge across the Vienne, heavily restored in the early 18th century.

Charroux ⑭

Vienne. 👥 *1,200.* ℹ *2 route de Chatain (05 49 87 60 12).* 🛒 *Thu.*

The 8th-century **Abbaye St-Sauveur** in Charroux was once one of the richest abbeys in the region. Today it has become no more than a ruin open to the sky (phone the tourist office to arrange a visit).

Its chief contribution to history was made in the 10th century, when the Council of Charroux declared the "Truce of God," the earliest-known attempt to regulate war in the manner of the Geneva convention. Rules included: "Christian soldiers may not plunder churches, strike priests, or steal peasants' livestock while campaigning."

The huge tower marking the center of the church, and some superb sculpture from the original abbey portal in the small museum here, give an idea of its original splendor.

Aulnay ⓯

Charente-Maritime. 👥 *1,500.* ℹ *290 av de l'Eglise (05 46 33 14 44).* 🛒 *Thu & Sun.* **www**.tourisme.aulnay.info

Perhaps the most unusual fact about the lovely 12th-century **Eglise St-Pierre** at Aulnay is that it was all built at once; there is no ill-fitting apse or transept added to an original nave. Surrounded by nothing but cypresses, it has remained the same since the time of the great pilgrimages.

The church is covered in glorious sculpture, particularly the outside of the south transept. It is a rare example of a complete Romanesque façade, with rank on rank of raucous monsters and graceful human figures. Look for the donkey with a harp. Inside the church there is a pillar decorated with elephants, inscribed "Here be Elephants."

Façade of Eglise St-Pierre at Aulnay

La Rochelle ⓰

Charente-Maritime. 👥 *80,000.* ✈ 🚆 🚌 ℹ *quai Georges Simenon, Le Gabut (05 46 41 14 68).* 🛒 *daily.* **www**.larochelle-tourisme.com

La Rochelle, a commercial center and busy port since the 11th century, has suffered much from a distressing tendency to back the wrong side – the English and the Calvinists, for example. This led to the ruthless siege of the city by Cardinal Richelieu in 1628, during which 23,000 people starved to death. The walls were destroyed and the city's privileges withdrawn. The glory of La Rochelle is the old harbor surrounded by stately buildings. The harbor is now the biggest yachting center on France's Atlantic coast. On either side of its entrance are **Tour de la Chaîne** and **Tour St-Nicolas**. A huge chain used to be strung between them to ward off attack from the sea.

Tour St-Nicolas in La Rochelle

La Rochelle is easy to explore on foot, though its cobbled streets and arcades can be congested in high summer. To get an overview, climb the 15th-century **Tour de la Lanterne**. Its inner walls were covered in graffiti by prisoners, mostly mariners, in the 17th–19th centuries. Ships are the most common motif.

The study of the 18th-century scientist Clément Lafaille is preserved in the renovated **Muséum d'Histoire Naturelle**, complete with shell collection and display cabinets. There are also stuffed animals and African masks. The town's relation to the New World is treated in the **Musée du Nouveau Monde**. Emigration, commerce, and the slave trade are explained through old maps, paintings, and artifacts.

The richly decorated 16th-century courtyard façade of the **Hôtel de Ville** is worth a visit, as is the delightful collection of perfume bottles in the **Musée du Flacon à Parfum** in the parfumerie at No. 33 rue du Temple.

Next to the Vieux Port is the huge **Aquarium**. Transparent tunnels lead through tanks with different marine biotopes, including sharks and turtles.

Tour de la Lanterne

Rue des Murs, Le Port. ***Tel*** *05 46 41 56 04.* ○ *May–mid-Sep: daily; mid-Sep–May: Tue–Sun.* ● *Jan 1, May 1, Nov 1 & 11, Dec 25.* 🎟

Muséum d'Histoire Naturelle

28 rue Albert Premier. ***Tel*** *05 46 41 18 25.* ○ *Tue–Sun.* 🎟 ♿

Musée du Nouveau Monde

10 rue Fleuriau. ***Tel*** *05 46 41 46 50.* ○ *Wed–Mon.* ● *Sat am (Oct–Mar), Sun am, Jan 1, May 1, Jul 14, Nov 1 & 11, Dec 25.* 🎟

Aquarium

Bassin des Grands Yachts, quai Louis Prunier. ***Tel*** *05 46 34 00 00.* ○ *daily.* 🎟 ♿ ☕ 🛍 🎧 **www**.aquarium-larochelle.com

Environs

Ile de Ré, also known as the white island, is a long stretch of chalky cliffs and dunes with a rich birdlife. Since 1988 it has been connected to the mainland by a 2-mile (3-km) long bridge. Head for **Ars-en-Ré** or the island's main town, **St-Martin-de-Ré**. There are plenty of seafood restaurants serving locally grown oysters.

Arcade in rue du Palais, La Rochelle

Rochefort ⓱

Charente-Maritime. 👥 *27,000.* 🚆 🚌 ℹ *av Sadi-Carnot (05 46 99 08 60).* 🛒 *Tue, Thu, & Sat.* **www**.paysrochefort-tourisme.com

The historic rival of La Rochelle, Rochefort was purpose-built by Colbert *(see pp56–7)* in the

Phare des Baleines on the eastern point of the Ile de Ré, opposite La Rochelle

17th century to be the greatest shipyard in France, producing over 300 sailing vessels per year.

This maritime heritage can be traced in the **Corderie Royale** from 1670. Beautifully restored, the building houses an exhibition on ropemaking. The **Musée de la Marine** displays models of the ships built in the arsenal.

Rochefort is also famous as the birthplace of the flamboyant writer Pierre Loti (1850–1923). The author's extravagant **Maison de Pierre Loti** is filled with lush souvenirs in an oriental decor.

The **Musée d'Art et d'Histoire** in the refurbished Hôtel Hèbre de Saint-Clément has an interesting ethnographic collection and a relief map of the old shipyard.

🏛 La Corderie Royale
Centre International de la Mer, rue Audebert. ***Tel*** *05 46 87 01 90.* ○ *daily.* ● *Jan 1, 7–25, Dec 25.* ⊘ ♿ 🛍

🏛 Musée de la Marine
Pl de la Galissonnière. ***Tel*** *05 46 99 86 57.* ○ *daily.* ● *Jan, May 1, Dec 25.* ⊘ 🛍

🏛 Maison de Pierre Loti
141 rue Pierre Loti. ***Tel*** *05 46 99 16 88.* ○ *Wed– Mon (daily Jul–Aug).* ● *Jan, Nov 1 & 11, Dec 25.* ⊘ ☞ *only.*

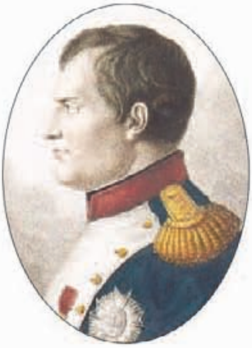
🏛 Musée d'Art et d'Histoire
63 av Charles de Gaulle. ***Tel*** *05 46 82 91 60.* ○ *Tue–Sun.* ● *Jan 1, May 1, 2 weeks in Nov, Dec 25.* ☞ *only.*

Environs

Ile d'Aix is served by a ferry from Fouras on the mainland. Napoleon was briefly kept here before being exiled to St-Helena. There are Napoleonic mementos in the **Musée Napoléonien**. The camel he rode in the Egyptian campaign is in the **Musée Africain**.

🏛 Musée Napoléonien
30 rue Napoléon. ***Tel*** *05 46 84 66 40.* ○ *Wed–Mon.* ● *May 1.* ⊘

🏛 Musée Africain
Rue Napoléon. ***Tel*** *05 46 84 66 40.* ○ *Wed–Mon.* ● *May 1.* ⊘ ♿



Napoleon, who was detained at Ile d'Aix in 1814

Île d'Oléron ⓲

Charente-Maritime. ✈ *La Rochelle.* 🚆 *Rochefort, La Rochelle, Saintes then bus.* ⛴ *from La Rochelle (in summer).* ℹ *Bourcefranc (05 46 85 65 23).*

Accessible from the mainland by bridge, Oleron is the second largest French island after Corsica, and a very popular vacation resort. Its south coast, the **Côte Sauvage**, is all dunes and pine forest, with excellent beaches at Vert Bois and Grande Plage, near the fishing port of La Cotinière. The north is used for farming and fishing.

The train from **St-Trojan** makes an interesting excursion through dunes and woodlands to the Pointe de Maumusson (Easter–Oct).

Brouage ⓳

Charente-Maritime. 👥 *580.* ℹ *2 rue de Québec, Hiers-Brouage (05 46 85 19 16).*

Cardinal Richelieu's fortress at Brouage, his base during the Siege of La Rochelle (1627–8), once overlooked a thriving harbor, but its wealth and population declined in the 18th century as the ocean receded. In 1659, Marie Mancini was sent into exile here by her uncle, Cardinal Mazarin, who did not approve of her liaison with Louis XIV. The king never forgot the beautiful Marie. Even on his way back from his wedding, he stayed alone at Brouage in the room once occupied by his first great love. Today the **ramparts** make a peaceful place to stroll and admire the view.

Environs

There are two reasons to go to **Marennes**, southwest of Brouage: the famous green-tinged oysters and the view from the steeple of Eglise St-Pierre-de-Sales. Nearby is the 18th-century **Château de la Gataudière** with an exhibition of horsedrawn vehicles.

One of Royan's five popular beaches

Royan ⑳

Charente-Maritime. 👥 *18,900.* 🚆 🚌 ⛴ *to Verdon only.* ℹ *avenue des Congrès (05 46 23 00 00).* 🛍 *Tue–Sun.* **www**.royan-tourisme.com

Badly damaged by Allied carpet-bombing at the end of World War II, Royan is now thoroughly modern and completely different in tone from the rest of the towns on this weather-beaten coast. With five beaches of fine sand, here called *conches*, it becomes a heavily populated resort in the summer months.

Built between 1955 and 1958, **Eglise Notre-Dame** is a remarkable early example of reinforced concrete architecture. Its interior is flooded with color and light by the stained-glass windows.

The outstanding Renaissance **Phare de Cordouan**, visible in the distance from the coast, offers a change from all the modern architecture. Various lighthouses have been erected on the site since the 11th century. The present one was finished in 1611, with a chapel inside. The construction was later reinforced and heightened. Since 1789, nothing has changed but the lighting method. Boat trips in summer ferry visitors to Phare de Cordouan from Royan harbor.

Talmont-sur-Gironde ㉑

Charente-Maritime. 👥 *83.* ℹ *rue de l'Église (05 46 90 16 25).*

The tiny Romanesque **Eglise Ste-Radegonde** is perched on a spit of land overlooking the Gironde. Built in 1094, the church's apse was designed to resemble the prow of a ship – which is apt, since the nave has already fallen into the estuary. A 15th-century façade closes off what's left. Inside are richly decorated capitals, including a tableau of St. George and the Dragon.

Talmont is a jewel of a village, packed full of little white houses and colorful hollyhocks in summer.

Saintes ㉒

Charente-Maritime. 👥 *28,000.* 🚆 🚌 ℹ *Villa Musso, 62 cours National (05 46 74 23 82).* 🛍 *Tue–Sun.* **www**.ot-saintes.fr

Capital of the Saintonge region, Saintes has an extraordinarily rich architectural heritage. For centuries it boasted the only bridge over the lower Charente, well used by pilgrims on their way to Santiago de Compostela. The Roman bridge no longer exists but you can still admire the magnificent **Arch of Germanicus** (AD 19), which used to mark its entrance.

On the same side of the river is the beautiful **Abbaye aux Dames**. Consecrated in 1047, it was modernized in the 12th century. During the 17th–18th centuries noble ladies were educated here. Look for the decorated portal and the vigorous 12th-century head of Christ in the apse.

On the left bank is the 1st-century Roman **amphitheater**. Farther away lies the rather unknown gem, **Eglise St-Eutrope**. In the 15th century, this church had the misfortune to effect a miraculous cure of the dropsy on Louis XI. In a paroxysm of gratitude, he did his best to wreck it with ill-considered Gothic additions. Luckily, its rare Romanesque capitals have survived.

Arch of Germanicus in Saintes

Cognac ㉓

Charente. 👥 *20,000.* 🚆 🚌 ℹ *16 rue du 14 Juillet (05 45 82 10 71).* 🛍 *Tue–Sun.* **www**.tourism-cognac.com

Wherever you spot the black lichen stains from alcohol evaporation on the exterior of the buildings in this port, you

Necropolis in the monolithic Eglise St-Jean in Aubeterre-sur-Dronne

may be sure that you are looking at a storehouse of cognac.

All the great cognac houses offer tours – a good one is chez **Cognac Otard**, situated in the 15th–16th-century château where François I was born. The distillery was established in 1795 by a Scot named Otard, who ruthlessly demolished an old chapel in the process. Luckily much of the Renaissance architecture was saved and can be seen during the tour, which includes a cognac-tasting.

Cognac in traditional snifter

The basic material for cognac is local white wine low in alcohol, which is then distilled. The resultant pale spirit is aged in oak barrels for 4–40 years before being bottled. The skill lies in the blending – therefore the only guide to quality is the name and the duration of ageing.

Cognac Otard
Château de Cognac, 127 bd Denfert-Rochereau. ***Tel*** *05 45 36 88 86.*
○ *Apr–Oct: daily; Nov–Dec: Mon–Fri.* ● *May 1 & public hols in winter.*
✋ ✋ *obligatory.* **www**.otard.com

Angoulême ㉔

Charente. 👥 *45,000.* 🚆 🚌 ⓘ *pl des Halles (05 45 95 16 84).* ⛺ *daily.*
www.angouleme-tourisme.com

The celebrated 12th-century **Cathédrale St-Pierre**, which dominates this industrial center, is the fourth to be built on the site. One of its most interesting features is the Romanesque frieze on the façade. Some exaggerated restoration work was done by the 19th-century architect Abadie. In his eagerness to wipe out all details added after the 12th century, he destroyed a 6th-century crypt. Unfortunately he was also let loose on the old château, transforming it into a Neo-Gothic **Hôtel de Ville** (town hall). However, the 15th-century tower where Marguerite d'Angoulême was born in 1492 still stands. A statue of her can be seen in the garden. Sister of François I, she spoke six languages, had an important role in foreign politics, and wrote a popular work, *Heptaméron*.

The ramparts offer a long bracing walk with views over the Charente Valley. A vintage car race takes place along the ramparts in mid-September.

Angoulême has become the capital of comic book art *(band dessinée)*, hosting the prestigious Festival de la Band Dessinée (Jan/Feb). The **Cité Internationale de la Bande-Dessinée et de l'Image** has a reference collection of French print and movie cartoons dating back to 1946. From here, a footbrige leads to the Musée de la Band Dessinée, where the history, techniques, and aesthetics of the art form are explained.

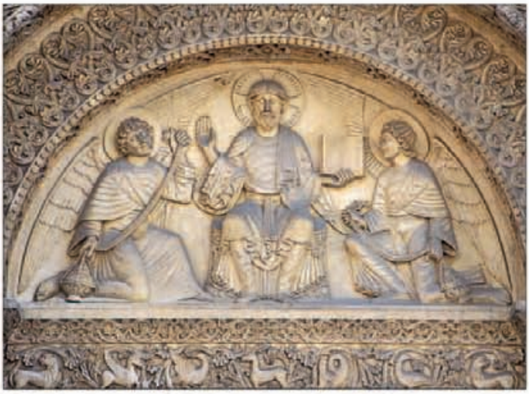
🏛 Cité Internationale de la Bande-Dessinée et de l'Image
121 rue de Bordeaux. ***Tel*** *05 45 38 65 65.* ○ *Tue–Sun (w/e pms only).*
● *Jan, public hols.* ✋ ♿ ☕ 🛍
Cinema **www**.cnbdi.fr

Aubeterre-sur-Dronne ㉕

Charente. 👥 *430.* 🚌 ⓘ *pl du Château (05 45 98 57 18).* ⛺ *Thu, Sun.*

The chief ornament of this pretty white village is the staggering monolithic **Eglise St-Jean**. Dug out of the white chalky cliff that gave the village its name (Alba Terra – White Earth), some parts of it date back to the 6th century. Between the Revolution and 1860, it served as the village's cemetery. It contains an early Christian baptismal font and an octagonal reliquary.

The Romanesque Eglise St-Jacques at the top of the village is also of note for its fine sculpted façade.

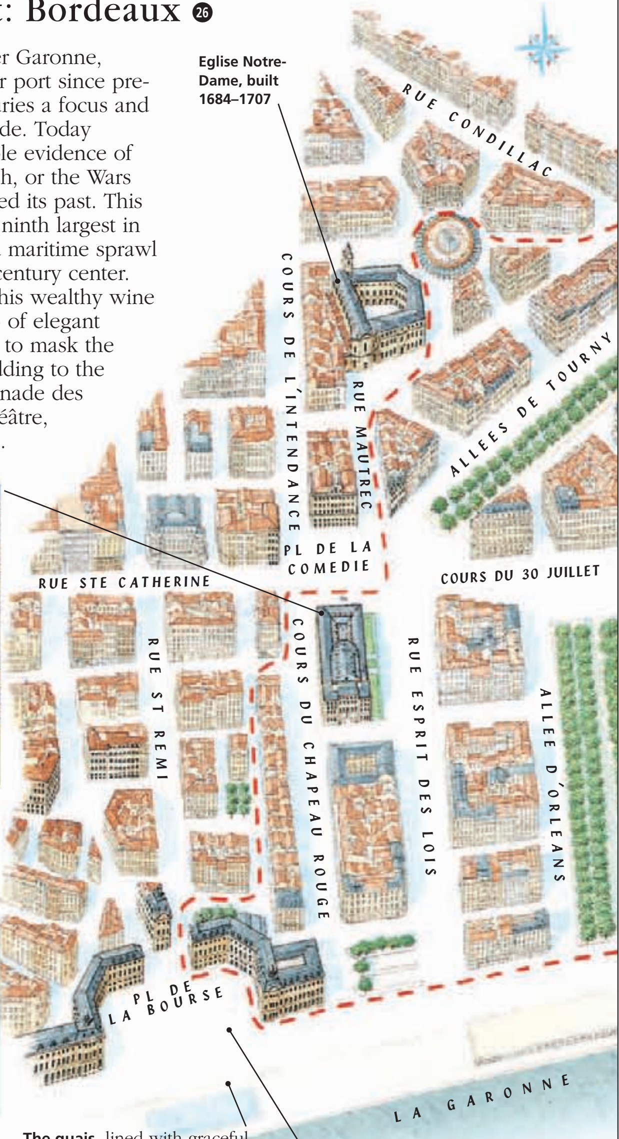


Detail from the Romanesque façade of Cathédrale St-Pierre in Angoulême

Street by Street: Bordeaux ㉖

Built on a curve of the river Garonne, Bordeaux has been a major port since pre-Roman times and for centuries a focus and crossroads of European trade. Today Bordeaux shows little visible evidence of the Romans, Franks, English, or the Wars of Religion that have marked its past. This forward-looking town, the ninth largest in France, is an industrial and maritime sprawl surrounding a noble 18th-century center.

Along the waterfront of this wealthy wine metropolis is a long sweep of elegant Classical façades, first built to mask the medieval slums behind. Adding to the magnificence are the Esplanade des Quinconces, the Grand Théâtre, and the place de la Bourse.


RUE CONDILLAC
COURS DE L'INTENDANCE
RUE MAUTREC
ALLEES DE TOURNY
PL DE LA COMEDIE
RUE STE CATHERINE
COURS DU 30 JUILLET
RUE ST REMI
COURS DU CHAPEAU ROUGE
RUE ESPRIT DES LOIS
ALLEE D'ORLEANS
PL DE LA BOURSE
LA GARONNE

Eglise Notre-Dame, built 1684–1707

The quais, lined with graceful façades, make a beautiful walk along the Garonne.

★ Grand Théâtre
Built in 1773–80, the theater is a masterpiece of the Classical style, crowned by 9 statues of the muses.

STAR SIGHTS

- ★ Grand Théâtre
- ★ Esplanade des Quinconces
- ★ Place de la Bourse

KEY

▬ ▬ Suggested route

0 meters 100
0 yards 100

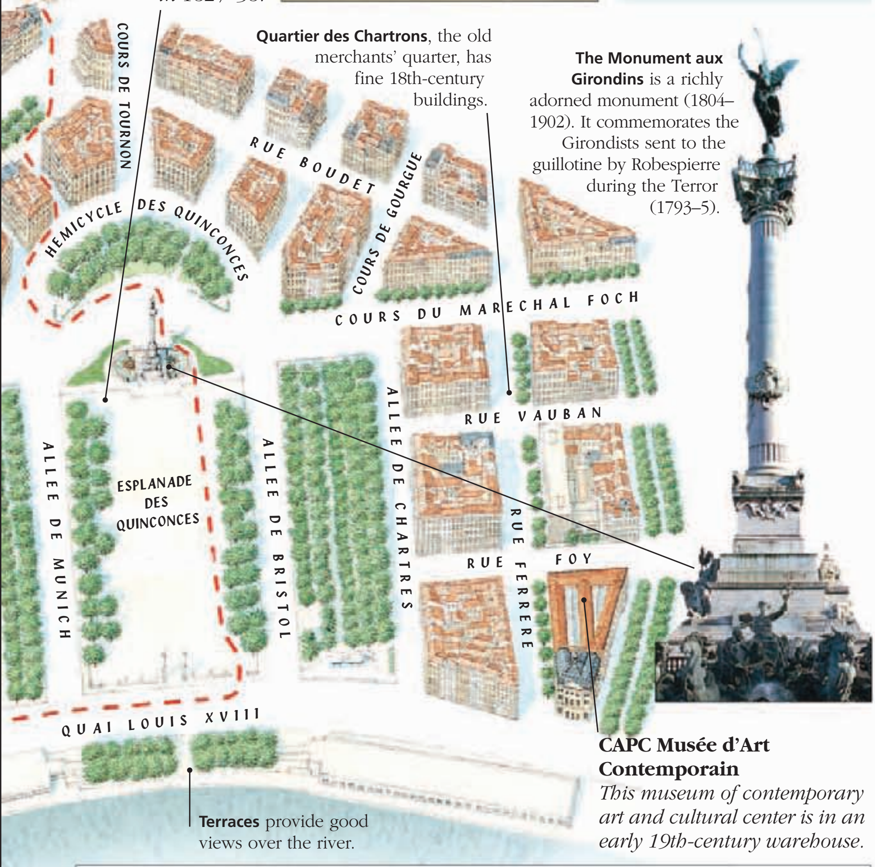
★ Place de la Bourse
This elegant and harmonious square is flanked by two majestic 18th-century buildings, Palais de la Bourse and Hôtel des Douanes.

★ Esplanade des Quinconces

Replacing the 15th-century Château de Trompette, this vast space of tree-lined esplanades with statues and fountains was created in 1827–58.

VISITORS' CHECKLIST

Gironde. 👥 *235,900.* ✈ *6 miles (10 km) W Bordeaux.* 🚆 *Gare St-Jean, rue Ch Domerq.* 🚌 *Allée de Chartres.* ℹ *12 cours du 30 Juillet (05 56 00 66 00).* ⛺ *daily.* 🎭 *Fête le Vin (late Jun, even yrs); Fête le Fleuve (late Jun, odd yrs).* **www**.bordeaux-tourisme.com


COURS DE TOURNON
RUE BOUDET
COURS DE GOURGUE
HEMICYCLE DES QUINCONCES
COURS DU MARECHAL FOCH
RUE VAUBAN
ALLEE DE MUNICH
ESPLANADE DES QUINCONCES
ALLEE DE BRISTOL
ALLEE DE CHARTRES
RUE FERRERE
RUE FOY
QUAI LOUIS XVIII

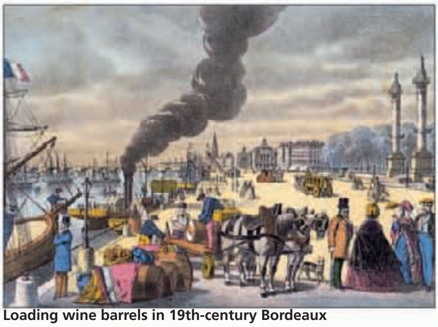
Quartier des Chartrons, the old merchants' quarter, has fine 18th-century buildings.

The Monument aux Girondins is a richly adorned monument (1804–1902). It commemorates the Girondists sent to the guillotine by Robespierre during the Terror (1793–5).

CAPC Musée d'Art Contemporain

This museum of contemporary art and cultural center is in an early 19th-century warehouse.

Terraces provide good views over the river.

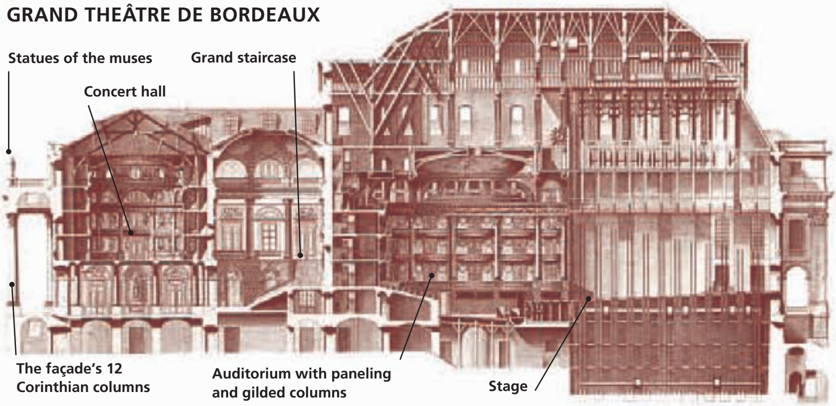


Loading wine barrels in 19th-century Bordeaux

THE BORDEAUX WINE TRADE

After Marseille, Bordeaux is the oldest trading port in France. From Roman times the export of wine was the basis for a modest prosperity, but under English rule (1154–1453, *see pp50–53*), the merchants began making immense fortunes from their monopoly of wine sales to England. After the discovery of the New World, Bordeaux took advantage of its Atlantic position to diversify and extend its wine market. Today the Bordeaux region produces over 55 million cases of wine per year.

GRAND THEÂTRE DE BORDEAUX


Statues of the muses
Grand staircase
Concert hall
The façade's 12 Corinthian columns
Auditorium with paneling and gilded columns
Stage

Exploring Bordeaux

Much of central Bordeaux is grand streets and 18th-century mansions. A triangle made by cours Clemenceau, cours de l'Intendance, and allées de Tourny has chic boutiques and cafés. Cathédrale St-André is another focal point, with good museums nearby. Both the *quais* and the Chartrons district around the Jardin Public are worth exploring.

🏛 Grand Théâtre

Place de la Comédie. ***Tel*** *05 66 00 66 00.*
○ *by appointment only.* ▨

Built by the architect Victor Louis, the 18th-century Grand Théâtre is one of the finest Classical constructions of its type in France. The auditorium is renowned for its extraordinary acoustics. The spectacular main staircase was later imitated by Garnier for the Paris Opéra *(see p97).*

⛪ Eglise St-Seurin

This church is somewhat chaotic with a patchwork of styles ranging from the 11th to the 18th century. Most interesting are the 6th-century Gallo-Roman sarcophagi in the crypt and a fine 14th-century bishop's throne.

⛪ Basilique St-Michel

It took 200 years to build the massive Basilique St-Michel, begun in 1350. This triple-naved edifice has a remarkable statue of St. Ursula with her flock of penitents. Its freestanding belfry, built in 1472–92, is the tallest in southern France (374 ft).

🏛 Musée des Beaux-Arts

20 cours d'Albret. ***Tel*** *05 56 10 20 56.*
○ *Wed–Mon.* ● *public hols.* ▨ ♿

Housed in two wings of the Hôtel de Ville, the excellent collection of paintings here ranges from the Renaissance to our time. Masterpieces include works by Titian, Veronese, Rubens, Delacroix, Corot, Renoir, Matisse, and Boudin.

🏛 Musée des Arts Décoratifs

39 rue Bouffard. ***Tel*** *05 56 10 14 00.*
○ *Wed–Mon.* ● *public hols.* ▨ ☕

If you're interested in elegant furnishings and fine porcelain, stop off at this exceptional collection, housed in the suitably refined 18th-century Hôtel de Lalande.

🏛 Musée d'Aquitaine

20 cours Pasteur. ***Tel*** *05 56 01 51 00.*
○ *Tue–Sun.* ● *public hols.* ♿

This important museum traces life in the region from prehistoric times to the present, through artifacts, furniture, and viticulture tools. Among its more spectacular exhibits are the Tayac treasure from the 2nd century BC and the Garonne treasure, a hoard of over 4,000 Roman coins.

Calm street in Bordeaux by the Porte de la Grosse Cloche

⛪ Cathédrale St-André

The nave of this gigantic church was begun in the 11th century and modified 200 years later. The Gothic choir and transepts were added in the 14th and 15th centuries. The excellent medieval sculptures on the Porte Royale include scenes from the Last Judgement.

🏛 CAPC Musée d'Art Contemporain

Entrepôt Lainé, 7 rue Ferrère.
Tel *05 56 00 81 50.* ○ *Tue–Sun.*
● *public hols.* ▨ ♿ 🛍 ☕

This superbly converted 19th-century warehouse merits a visit, whatever you make of its high-profile temporary exhibitions and permanent collection of contemporary art.

St-Émilion ㉗

Gironde. 👥 *2,200.* 🚆 🚌 ℹ *pl des Créneaux (05 57 55 28 28).* ⛺ *Sun.*
www.saint-emilion-tourisme.com

This charming village, in the middle of the red wine district to which it gives its name, dates back to an 8th-century hermit, Émilion, who dug out a cave for himself in the rock. A monastery followed, and by the Middle Ages St-Émilion had become a small town. Today medieval houses still line the narrow streets, and parts of the 12thcentury ramparts remain. The interior of the church dug out of the chalky cliff by followers of Saint Émilion after his death is somewhat ruined by concrete columns put up to prevent its collapse.

Famous châteaux in the district include the elegant **Figeac, Cheval Blanc**, and **Ausone**, all of them St-Émilion Premiers Grands Crus Classés.

Vineyard close to Margaux in the Médoc region west of Bordeaux

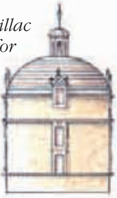
Pauillac ㉘

Gironde. 👥 *5,400.* 🚉 🚌 ℹ *La Verrerie (05 56 59 03 08).* ⛺ *Sat.* **www**.pauillac-medoc.com

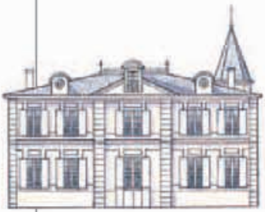
One of the most famous areas in the Médoc wine region *(see pp398–9)* is the commune of Pauillac. Three of its châteaux are Médoc Premiers Grands Crus Classés. The **Château Mouton-Rothschild** uses leading artists to create its wine labels and has a small museum of paintings on wine themes from all over the world. The **Château Lafite-Rothschild** is of medieval origin and the **Château Latour** is recognizable by its distinctive stone turret. They can be visited by appointment (contact the tourist office). The town of Pauillac is situated on the west bank of the Gironde. In the 19th century it was the bustling arrival point for transatlantic steamships, but now the sleepy port is mostly used by pleasure boats. There are picturesque river views from the quais and plenty of cafés serving the local wine.

BORDEAUX WINE CHÂTEAUS

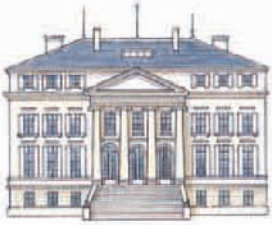
The château is at the heart of the quality system in Bordeaux, the world's largest fine wine region. A château includes a vineyard and a building which can range from the most basic to the grandest, historic as well as modern. But the château is also the symbol of a tradition and the philosophy that a wine's quality and character spring from the soil. Some châteaus welcome visitors for wine tasting as well as buying. Every major wine town has a Maison du Vin, which can provide information on visits to a château.



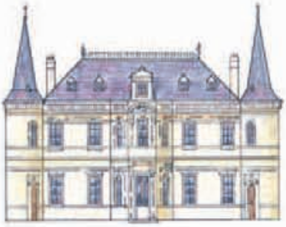
Latour *in Pauillac is famous for its powerful wines and the medieval stone turret that appears on its label.*



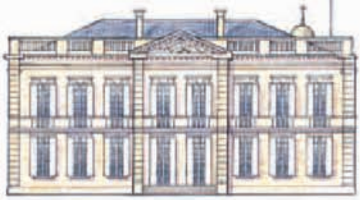
Cheval Blanc, *a great château in the St-Émilion area, boasts a rich, spicy Premier Grand Cru.*



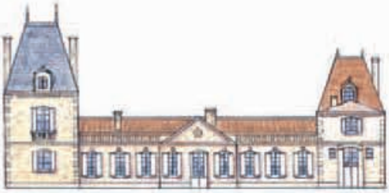
Margaux, *built in 1802, produces a classic Margaux Premier Cru of the same elegant proportions as its Palladian façade.*



Palmer, *dating from 1856, is Neo-Renaissance in style and produces a very fine Margaux Troisième Cru.*



Gruaud-Larose *is a cream-colored château with a Classical façade, distinguished by its full-bodied St-Julien Deuxième Cru Classé.*



Vieux Château Certan *is Belgian-owned and one of the great historic properties of Pomerol. Its wines are consistently in the first rank in the district, challenged only by Pétrus.*

The immense Dune du Pilat, stretching almost 2 miles (3 km) south of the inlet to Bassin d'Arcachon

La Côte d'Argent ㉙

Gironde, Landes. ✈ *Bordeaux, Biarritz.* 🚆 *Soulac-sur-Mer, Arcachon, Labenne, Dax.* 🚌 *Lacanau, Arcachon, Mimizan.* ℹ *Lacanau (05 56 03 21 01), Mimizan-Plage (05 58 09 11 20), Capbreton (05 58 72 12 11).*

The long stretch of coast between Pointe de Grave on the Gironde estuary and Bayonne *(see p452)* is called La Côte d'Argent – the Silver Coast. It is virtually one vast beach of shifting sand dunes. Treeplanting has now slowed down their progress.

The coast is dotted with seaside resorts like **Soulac-sur-Mer** in the north, followed by the big **Lacanau-Océan** and **Mimizan-Plage**. Down in the south is **Hossegor** with its salty lake, and **Capbreton**. Modern vacation resorts have been integrated with the old.

Inland are lakes popular for fishing and boating. They are connected to each other and the ocean by lively water currents, such as the **Courant d'Huchet** from Etang de Léon. Boat trips are available.

Bassin d'Arcachon ㉚

Gironde. 👥 *11,500.* ⛴ *to Cap Ferret.* 🚆 🚌 ℹ *espl Georges Pompidou (05 57 52 97 97).* 🧺 *daily.* **www**.arcachon.com

In the middle of the Côte d'Argent the straight coastline suddenly forms a lagoon. Famous for its natural beauty, fine beaches, and oysters, the Bassin d'Arcachon is a protected area, perfect for vacationers, sailing enthusiasts, and oyster-eaters.

The basin is dotted with smaller amorphous resorts, beaches, and fishing/oyster villages, all worth exploring.

Cap Ferret, the northern headland that protects the basin from stiff Atlantic winds, is a preserve of the wealthy, whose luxurious villas stand among the pines. Look for the small road under the trees from Lège, which leads to the wild, magnificent beach of Grand-Crohot.

Between Cap Ferret and Arcachon, near Gujan-Mestras, the **Parc Ornithologique du Teich** provides care and shelter for damaged birds and endangered species. For the bird watcher, there are two fascinating walks, each carefully marked: an introductory one, and another of greater length. Both provide concealed observation points from which people can watch the wild fowl without disturbing them.

Arcachon was created as a seaside resort in 1845. Its popularity grew and in the late 19th and early 20th centuries the elegant villas in Ville d'Hiver were built. The livelier Ville d'Eté, facing the lagoon, has a casino and sports facilities.

The immense **Dune du Pilat** is the largest sand dune in Europe. It is nearly 2 miles (3 km) long, 340 ft (104 m) high, and 1,625 ft (500 m) wide. Aside from the view, the dune is a great vantage point in the fall for viewing flocks of migratory birds as they pass overhead on their way to the sanctuary at Le Teich.

Parc Ornithologique du Teich
Le Teich. ***Tel*** *05 56 22 80 93.*
○ *daily.* 🎧 ♿ ☕ 🛍 **www**.
parc-ornithologique-du-teich.com

Parc Ornithologique du Teich, a bird sanctuary in Bassin d'Arcachon

LANDES FOREST

The vast, totally artificial 19th-century forest of Les Landes was an ambitious project to make use of an area of sand and marshes. Pines and grasses were planted to anchor the coastal dunes, and inland dunes were stabilized with a mixture of pines, reeds and broom. In 1855 the land was drained, and is now covered with pine groves and undergrowth, preserving a delicate ecological balance.

Pine trees in the Landes forest

Les Landes ㉛

Gironde, Landes. ✈ *Bordeaux, Biarritz.* 🚆 *Morcenx, Dax, Mont-de-Marsan.* 🚌 *Mont-de-Marsan.* ℹ *Mont-de-Marsan (05 58 05 87 37).*

Almost entirely covered by an immense pine forest, the Landes area extends over the two *départements* of Gironde and Landes. The soil here is uniformly sandy. Until a century ago the whole region became a swamp in winter, because of a layer of tufa (porous rock) just under the surface that retained water from the brackish lakes. Any settlement or agriculture close to the sea was impossible, due to the constantly shifting dunes. Furthermore, the mouth of the Adour river kept moving from Capbreton to Vieux-Boucau and back, a distance of 20 miles (32 km).

The Adour was fixed near Bayonne by a canal in the 16th century. This was the start of the slow conquest of the Landes. The planting of pine trees ultimately wiped out the migrant shepherds and their flocks. Today the inner Landes is still very under-populated, but wealthy from its pinewood and pine derivatives. The coastal strip has a large influx of vacationers.

In 1970, part of the forest was made into a nature park. At **Marqueze**, in the **Écomusée de la Grande Lande**, a typical 19th-century *airial* (clearing) has been restored. It commemorates the vanished world of Les Landes before the draining of the marshes, when shepherds still used stilts to get around. There are traditional *auberges landaises*, wooden houses with sloping roofs, as well as henhouses built on stilts because of the foxes. In **Luxey** a museum recalls old techniques of tapping and distillation of resin.

Levignacq, near the coast, is a perfect Landais village with a remarkable 14th-century fortified church full of charming naive frescoes.

Mont-de-Marsan ㉜

Landes. 👥 *32,000.* 🚆 🚌 ℹ *6 pl du Général Leclerc (05 58 05 87 37).* ⊖ *Tue & Sat.* **www**.mont-de-marsan.org

A bullfighting mecca, Mont-de-Marsan attracts all the great bullfighters of France and Spain during the summer season. A less bloodthirsty local variant of the sport, very popular here, is the *course landaise*, in which the object is to vault over the horns and back of a charging cow.

The administrative capital of the Landes is also known for its hippodrome and the production of poultry and *foie gras*.

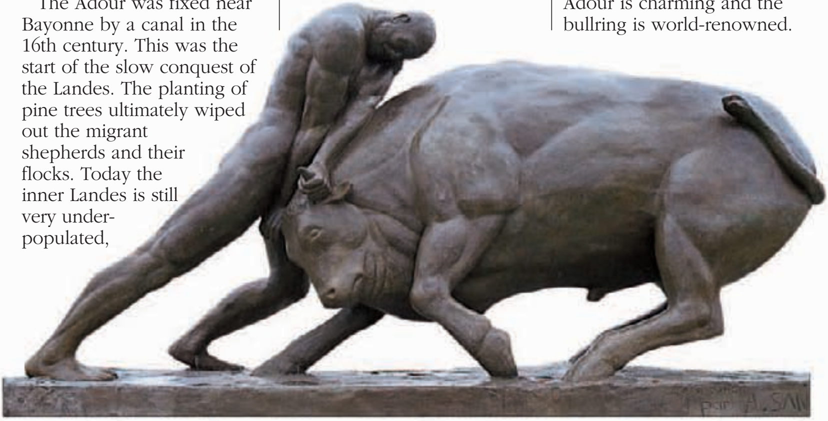
Sculpture from the first half of the 20th century can be seen at **Musée Despiau-Wlérick**.

Dax ㉝

Landes. 👥 *21,800.* 🚆 🚌 ℹ *cours Foch (05 58 56 86 86).* ⊖ *Sat, Sun am.*

The thermal spa of Dax is second only to Aix-les-Bains *(see p390)* in importance. Its hot springs, with a constant temperature of 147° F (64° C) and tonic mud from the Adour, have been soothing aches and pains and promoting tranquility since the time of Emperor Augustus.

Apart from the 13th-century doorway of the otherwise 17th-century **Cathédrale Notre-Dame**, there isn't much of architectural interest in this warm, peaceful town. But the promenade along the river Adour is charming and the bullring is world-renowned.



***La Force* (1937) by Raoul Lamourdieu, in the bullfighting capital of Mont-de-Marsan**

Bar
Restaurant
Hotel
Terrasse de l'Hotel
Restaurant

PERIGORD, QUERCY, AND GASCONY

DORDOGNE · LOT · TARN · HAUTE GARONNE
LOT-ET-GARONNE · TARN-ET-GARONNE · GERS

Southwest France is an archeologist's heaven, for the region has been continuously inhabited by mankind for tens of thousands of years, longer than any other area in Europe. The landscape of these historic regions seems to have an ancient familiarity, derived from centuries of people living in harmony with the land.

The great cave sites around Les Eyzies and Lascaux harbor the earliest evidence we possess of primitive art. The castles, bastides *(see p445),* and churches that grace the countryside from Périgueux to the Pyrenees, from the Bay of Biscay to Toulouse, and beyond to the Mediterranean, belong to a far more recent past. From the coming of Christianity until the late 18th century, this lovely region was the battlefield for a string of conflicts. The English fought and lost the Hundred Years' War for Aquitaine (1345–1453); this was followed by intermittent Wars of Religion, in which Catholics fought Huguenots (French Protestants) in a series of massacres and guerilla wars *(see pp52–3).*

Today nothing is left of these old struggles but crumbling ramparts, keeps, and bastides, which are part of the region's cultural and artistic heritage, attracting thousands of visitors every year. Yet it is as well to remember that all the great sights here, from the abbey church at Moissac, whose 12th-century portal is a masterpiece of Romanesque art, to the awesome clifftop site of Rocamadour, have suffered at one time or another from the attacks of marauding soldiers.

Over the last 50 years, the rural southwest has gone through a radical demographic shift. There has been a steady decline in the old peasant way of life, with fewer and fewer people cultivating the land. A steady migration by the young to the cities has been matched by an influx of downsizers and commuters looking for a more relaxed way of life.

Périgord geese, reared for the area's celebrated *foie gras*

◁ **La Roque-Gageac in the Dordogne Valley**

Exploring Périgord, Quercy, and Gascony

The market towns of Périgueux, Cahors, and Albi make good bases for exploring the region, and are quieter alternatives to Toulouse – the only major urban center. Elsewhere, the green hills and sleepy villages of Gascony and Périgord (also known as the Dordogne) are mainly for those who appreciate the slow pace of life in the countryside. But if you want more than peace and good food, this region offers some of France's finest medieval architecture, and Europe's most important prehistoric caves, notably Lascaux.

GRAND ECUYER

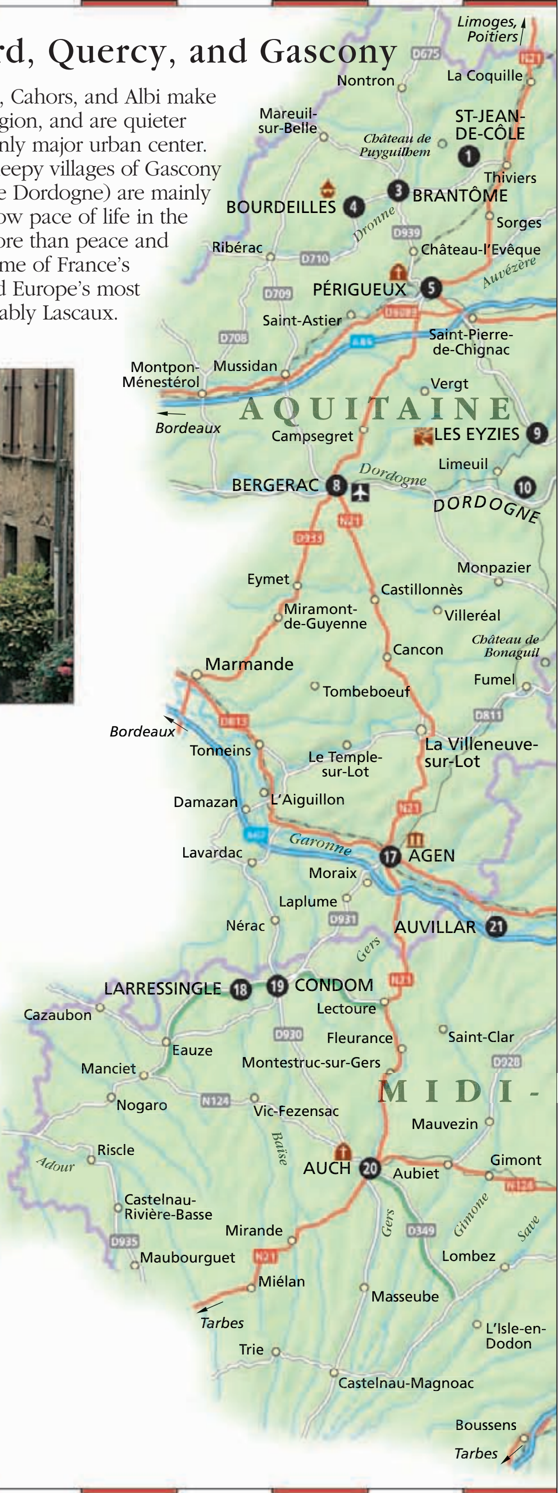
The medieval hilltop town of Cordes

GETTING AROUND

The west–east Autoroute des Deux Mers (A62-A61) is the main road through the region, linking Bordeaux, the Atlantic coast, and the Mediterranean. The A20 from Montauban to Limoges provides access to the Dordogne and Quercy. Buses and mainline railroads, including a Bordeaux–Marseille TGV, pass along the same two axes. They meet at Toulouse, where an international airport has daily flights to and from most European destinations.

KEY

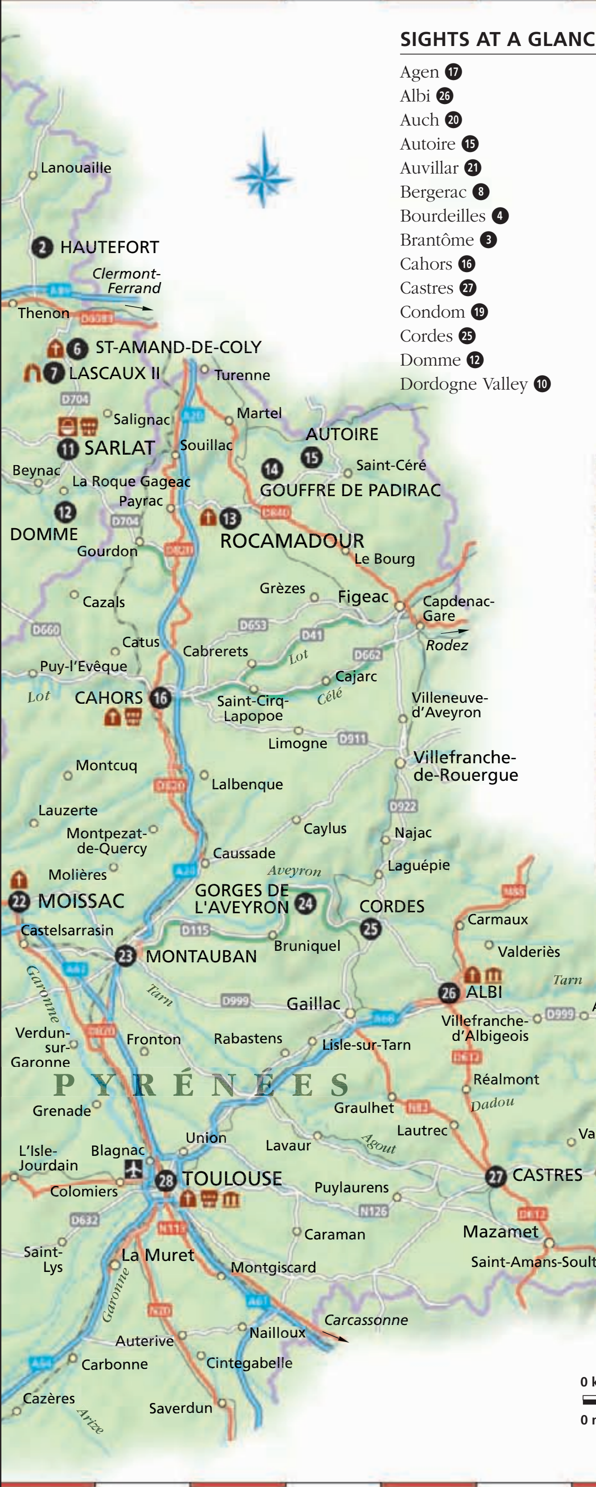
- ▬ Highway
- ▬ Major road
- ▬ Secondary road
- ═ Minor road
- ▬ Scenic route
- ▬ Main railroad
- ― Minor railroad
- ▬ Regional border


Limoges, Poitiers
D675
N21
Nontron
La Coquille
Mareuil-sur-Belle
Château de Puyguilhem
ST-JEAN-DE-CÔLE
1
Thiviers
BOURDEILLES
4
3
BRANTÔME
Dronne
Sorges
D939
Ribérac
D710
Château-l'Evêque
Auvézère
D709
PÉRIGUEUX
5
Saint-Astier
D6089
D708
A89
Saint-Pierre-de-Chignac
Montpon-Ménestérol
Mussidan
Vergt
AQUITAINE
Bordeaux
Campsegret
LES EYZIES
9
Limeuil
Dordogne
BERGERAC
8
10
DORDOGNE
N21
D933
Monpazier
Eymet
Castillonnès
Miramont-de-Guyenne
Villeréal
Château de Bonaguil
Cancon
Marmande
Fumel
Tombeboeuf
D811
Bordeaux
D813
Tonneins
Le Temple-sur-Lot
La Villeneuve-sur-Lot
Damazan
L'Aiguillon
N21
A62
Garonne
Lavardac
17
AGEN
Moraix
Laplume
Nérac
D931
AUVILLAR
21
Gers
LARRESSINGLE
18
19
CONDOM
N21
Cazaubon
Lectoure
Eauze
D930
Fleurance
Saint-Clar
Montestruc-sur-Gers
D928
Manciet
MIDI-
Nogaro
N124
Vic-Fezensac
Mauvezin
Baïse
Riscle
Adour
AUCH
20
Aubiet
Gimont
N124
Castelnau-Rivière-Basse
Gers
D349
Gimone
Save
Mirande
D935
Maubourguet
N21
Lombez
Miélan
Masseube
Tarbes
L'Isle-en-Dodon
Trie
Castelnau-Magnoac
Boussens
Tarbes

For additional map symbols *see back flap*

SIGHTS AT A GLANCE

Agen	⑰
Albi	㉖
Auch	⑳
Autoire	⑮
Auvillar	㉑
Bergerac	⑧
Bourdeilles	④
Brantôme	③
Cahors	⑯
Castres	㉗
Condom	⑲
Cordes	㉕
Domme	⑫
Dordogne Valley	⑩
Gorges de l'Aveyron	㉔
Gouffre de Padirac	⑭
Hautefort	②
Larressingle	⑱
Lascaux II	⑦
Les Eyzies	⑨
Moissac	㉒
Montauban	㉓
Périgueux	⑤
Rocamadour	⑬
St-Amand-de-Coly	⑥
St-Jean-de-Côle	①
Sarlat	⑪
Toulouse	㉘


Lanouaille
② HAUTEFORT
Clermont-Ferrand
Thenon
A89
D6089
⑥ ST-AMAND-DE-COLY
⑦ LASCAUX II
Turenne
D704
Salignac
A20
Martel
⑪ SARLAT
Souillac
AUTOIRE
⑮
Saint-Céré
Beynac
⑭
La Roque Gageac
GOUFFRE DE PADIRAC
Payrac
⑫
D704
⑬
D840
DOMME
ROCAMADOUR
Gourdon
D820
Le Bourg
Cazals
Grèzes
Figeac
Capdenac-Gare
D660
D653
D41
Rodez
Catus
Cabrerets
Lot
D662
Puy-l'Evêque
Cajarc
Lot
CAHORS ⑯
Saint-Cirq-Lapopoe
Célé
Villeneuve-d'Aveyron
Limogne
D911
Montcuq
Villefranche-de-Rouergue
Lalbenque
D820
D922
Lauzerte
Caylus
Montpezat-de-Quercy
Najac
Caussade
Molières
Aveyron
Laguépie
A20
㉒ MOISSAC
GORGES DE L'AVEYRON ㉔
CORDES
㉕
N88
Carmaux
Castelsarrasin
D115
Bruniquel
Valderiès
㉓ MONTAUBAN
A62
Garonne
Tarn
Tarn
㉖ ALBI
D999
Gaillac
A68
Villefranche-d'Albigeois
D999
Alban
Verdun-sur-Garonne
N20
Fronton
Rabastens
Lisle-sur-Tarn
D612
Réalmont
PYRÉNÉES
Grenade
Graulhet
N88
Dadou
Lacaune
Lautrec
Union
Vabre
D622
L'Isle-Jourdain
Blagnac
Lavaur
Agout
㉘ TOULOUSE
㉗ CASTRES
Brassac
Colomiers
Puylaurens
D632
N126
N117
Caraman
D612
Mazamet
Thoré
Saint-Lys
La Muret
Montgiscard
Saint-Amans-Soult
Garonne
N20
A61
Carcassonne
Auterive
Nailloux
A64
Carbonne
Cintegabelle
Cazères
Saverdun
Arize
0 kilometers 25
0 miles 25

Bourdeilles on the river Dronne

St-Jean-de-Côle ❶

Dordogne. 👥 350. ℹ *pl du Château (05 53 62 14 15).* 🎪 *Floralies (Apr–May).* **www**.ville-saint-jean-de-cole.fr

St-Jean-de-Côle's medieval, humpbacked bridge gives the best view of this lovely Dordogne village set in hilly countryside. Stone and half-timbered houses, roofed with the distinctive red-brown tiles of the region, cram the narrow streets around the main square. Here stand a covered market place, château, and 12th-century church.

The cupola of the church used to be the largest in the region – too large, it seems, for it fell down twice in the 18th and 19th centuries. The second time it happened the builders gave up, and there has been a plank ceiling ever since.

Main square in the lovely village of St-Jean-de-Côle

Hautefort ❷

Tel *05 53 50 40 27.* ***Château*** ○ *Apr–Sep: daily (Oct: daily, pms only); Feb, Mar & Nov: Sat, Sun & hols, pms only).* ● *Dec–Jan.* 🎫 ✋ *oblig.* ♿ *limited.*

Hautefort clings to the sides of a steep hill topped by a massive 17th-century château, one of the finest in southwest France. Partially fortified, built as a pleasure palace in honor of King Louis XIII's secret love, the Marquis de Hautefort's beautiful sister Marie, the castle is surrounded by French gardens on terraces with superb views of the rolling green country of northeast Périgord. In the village, the hospice, of a similar date, has a fascinating museum of early medical and dental implements.

Brantôme Abbey, with belfry

Brantôme ❸

Dordogne. 👥 *2,100.* 🚌 ℹ *inside the abbey (05 53 05 80 52).* ⊖ *Fri.* **www**.ville-brantome.fr

Surrounded on all sides by the river Dronne, Brantôme is sometimes called the Venice of the Périgord Vert. Its medieval abbey and 11th-century belfry (reputedly the oldest still standing in France), together with the verdant rockface behind, provide a dramatic backdrop for this picturesque town.

Pierre de Bourdeille, the poet (1540–1614), was appointed abbot here in his youth. His lovers allegedly included Mary, Queen of Scots. After a crippling fall, Bourdeille retired here in 1569 to write his racy memoirs. It is possible to wander the stone staircases and cloisters, and through the main courtyard to the intriguing troglodyte dwellings in the cliff behind. In one is a huge crucifixion scene cut into the stone during the 16th century. Just 7 miles (12 km) northeast, near Villars, lies the fine Renaissance **Château de Puyguilhem** and **Grotte de Villars**. Discovered in 1953, these caves are extensive and on several different levels. Apart from spectacular rock formations, there are some marvelous 1,700-year-old cave paintings.

Château de Puyguilhem
Villars. ***Tel*** *05 53 54 82 18.* ○ *May–Oct: daily (phone to check other months).* ● *Jan 1, Dec 25.* 🎫 ♿

Grotte de Villars
Villars. ***Tel*** *05 53 54 82 36.* ○ *Apr–Oct: daily.* 🎫 ✋ *oblig.*

Bourdeilles ❹

Dordogne. 👥 *800.* ℹ *Place Tilleuls (05 53 03 42 96).*

This small town has everything – a narrow Gothic bridge with cutwater piers spanning the Dronne, a mill upstream, and a medieval **château**. The 16th-century additions to the castle were designed in a hurry by the châtelaine Jacquette de Montbron, when expecting Queen Catherine de' Medici to visit. When the royal visit was called off, so were the building works. The highlight of the château is the gilded first-floor salon, decorated in the 1560s by Ambroise le Noble, of the Fontainebleau School.

Château de Bourdeilles
Tel *05 53 03 73 36.* ○ *Jul–Aug: pm only Mon–Sat; Sep–Jun: by appointment.* ● *Jan.* 🎫 ✋

The impressive Château de Bourdeilles towering above the town

Cathédrale St-Front in Périgueux, restored in the 19th century

Périgueux ❺

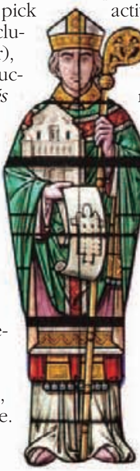
Dordogne. 👥 *31,000.* ✈ 🚆 🚌 ℹ *26 pl Francheville (05 53 53 10 63).* ⊖ *daily.* **www**.tourisme-perigueux.fr

The ancient and truly gastronomic city of Périgueux, like its neighbors Bergerac and Riberac, should be visited on market day, when stalls in the lively squares in the medieval part of town offer the pick of local specialties, including truffles (Nov–Mar), *charcuterie*, and the succulent pies called *pâtés de Périgueux*.

Périgueux, now the busy regional capital, has long been the crossroads of Périgord. The earliest part remaining today is the quarter known as **La Cité**, once the important Gallo-Roman settlement of Vesunna. La Domus de Vesonne, a Gallo-Roman museum, has just opened on site. From Roman times to the Middle Ages, this was the focus of Périgueux. Most of the fabric of Vesunna was pulled down in the 3rd century, but some vestiges of a temple, a huge arena, and a sumptuous villa remain. The **Eglise St-Etienne** nearby dates back to the 12th century.

Walking up the hill from La Cité to the city's dazzling white cathedral you pass through bustling streets and squares, each with its market activity. This is the medieval quarter of **Le Puy St-Front**, which began to flourish as pilgrims on their way to Santiago de Compostela *(see p400)* visited the cathedral. As they brought prestige and wealth to the quarter, it gradually eclipsed La Cité.

At the top stands the imposing **Cathédrale St-Front**, the largest in southwestern France. The Romanesque construction was heavily restored in the 19th century, when architect Paul Abadie added the fanciful domes and cones. He later used St-Front as inspiration for the Sacré-Coeur in Paris *(see p134)*.



19th-century stained glass in Cathédrale St-Front

Other gems of medieval and Renaissance architecture include **Maison Estignard**, at No. 3 rue Limogeanne, with its unusual corkscrew staircase, and houses along rue Aubergerie and rue de la Constitution.

Also in the cathedral quarter is the **Musée d'Art et d'Archéologie du Périgord**, one of the most comprehensive prehistory museums in France, with remnants of burials dating back 70,000 years. Beautiful Roman glass, mosaics, earthenware, and other artifacts from Vesunna are in the Gallo-Roman museum.

🏛 Musée d'Art et d'Archéologie du Périgord
22 cours Tourny. ***Tel*** *05 53 06 40 70.*
○ *Wed–Mon.* ● *public hols.* ♿

St-Amand-de-Coly ❻

Dordogne. ***Tel*** *Maison du Patrimoine (05 53 51 04 56, summer only); La Mairie.* ○ *daily.*

This abbey church is an outstanding example of fortress architecture, built in the 12th–13th centuries by Augustinian monks to protect their monastery. There are two lines of defense: a high stone rampart and, behind it, the arched tower of the church itself. The tower looks more like a castle keep, and was once pierced by arrow slits.

Inside, the church is beautifully simple, with pure lines, a flat ribbed vault, 12th-century cupola, a soaring nave, and a stone floor sloping upward to the altar. Yet even this interior was arranged for defense, with a gallery from which enemies within the building could be attacked.

St-Amand was heavily damaged during the Hundred Years' War. Later, in 1575, it survived a siege by 2,000 Huguenot cavalry and a six-day bombardment by cannon. Religious life here finally came to an end after the Revolution.

Sarlat ⓫

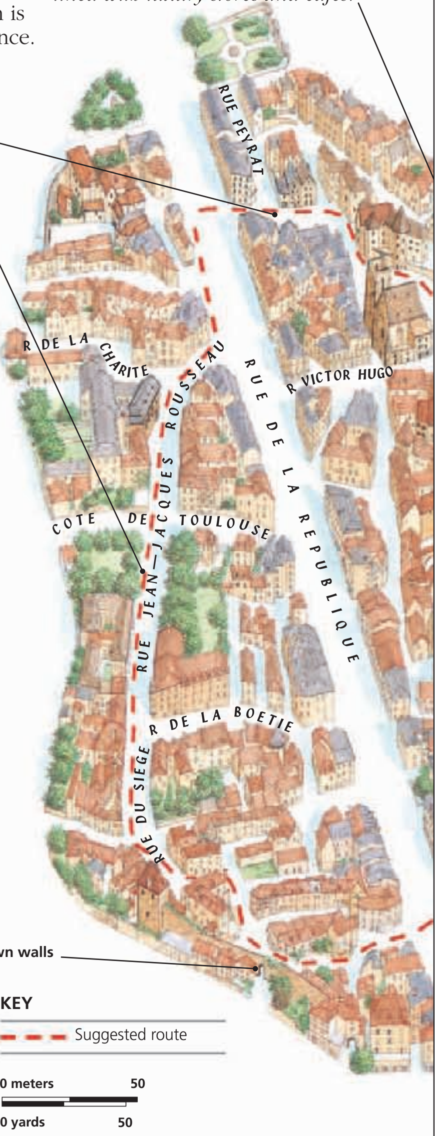
Sculptures of geese in Sarlat

Sarlat-la-Caneda possesses the highest concentration of medieval, Renaissance, and 17th-century façades of any town in France. Its prosperity was a reflection of the privileged status it was granted in return for loyalty to the French crown during the Hundred Years' War. Behind the nondescript rue de la République are narrow lanes and archways, and ancient, ocher-colored stone town houses rich in ornamental detail. Protected by law since 1962, Sarlat's buildings now form an open-air museum. The town is also famous for one of the best markets in France.

Place de la Liberté
The Renaissance heart of Sarlat is now lined with luxury stores and cafés.

Rue des Consuls contains 15th-, 16th-, and 17th-century mansions, built for the town's middle-class merchants, magistrates and church officials.

Rue Jean-Jacques Rousseau was the main street until rue de la République (known as "La Traverse") was built in the 19th century.



Town walls

Walnuts, a key Périgord crop

SARLAT MARKET

Every Wednesday, the great Sarlat food market is held in place de la Liberté, and every Saturday there is a full-scale fair which attracts locals from all around. Sarlat lies at the heart of the nation's *foie gras* and walnut trades. These typical Périgord products absorb much of the town's attention and supply a good proportion of its revenue, as they did during Sarlat's heyday in the 14th and 15th centuries. Other local specialties are black truffles dug up in the woods in January, and wild mushrooms. Seek out, too, the cheeses of every shape, age, and hue, and the huge range of pork delicacies available, which may be potted, fresh, smoked, dried, salted, fried, baked, or boiled.

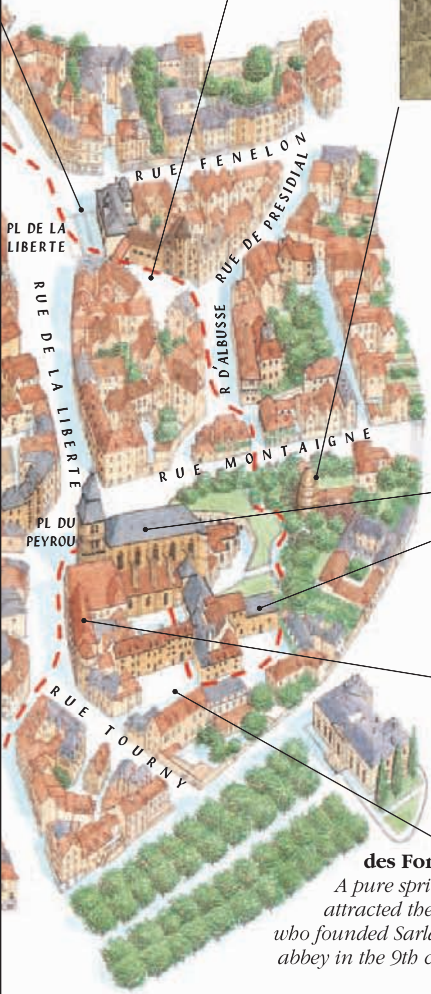
Bulbs of pink garlic

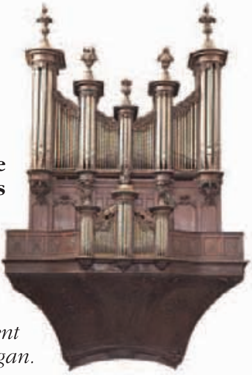
Rue de la Salamandre
This lane was named after the salamander emblem of King François I, seen on many of the town's 16th-century houses.

VISITORS' CHECKLIST

Dordogne. 👥 19,000.
🚉 av de la Gare.
ℹ 3 rue Tourny (05 53 31 45 45). 🛒 Wed & Sat.
🎭 Theater (Jul–Aug); Film (Nov).
www.sarlat-tourisme.com

Lanterne des Morts (Lantern of the Dead)
The conical tower in the cemetery was built to commemorate St-Bernard's sermons in Sarlat in August 1147.


RUE FENELON
RUE DE PRESIDIAL
PL DE LA LIBERTE
RUE DE LA LIBERTE
R D'ALBUSSE
RUE MONTAIGNE
PL DU PEYROU
RUE TOURNY

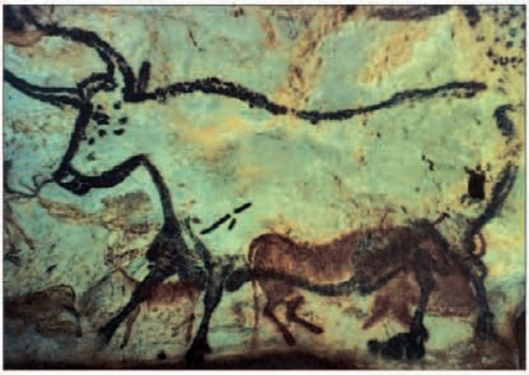


Cathédrale St-Sacerdos
Built largely in the 16th and 17th centuries, the cathedral is remarkable for its magnificent 18th-century organ.

The Chapelle des Pénitents Bleus, built in pure Romanesque style, is the last vestige of the 12th-century abbey.

The former Bishop's Palace, with remains of a 16th-century loggia and a Renaissance interior, is now a tourist office which puts on excellent summer exhibitions.

Cour des Fontaines
A pure spring here attracted the monks who founded Sarlat's first abbey in the 9th century.



Painting of a bull from the original cave at Lascaux

Lascaux II ⑦

Montignac. ***Tel*** *05 53 05 65 65.* ○ *Feb–mid-Nov daily; mid-Nov–Feb: Tue–Sun; times vary – phone to check.* ● *Jan, Dec 25.* 💶 ☞ **www**.semitour.com

Lascaux is the most famous of the prehistoric sites clustered around the junction of the rivers Vézère and Beune *(see pp402–3)*. Four boys came across the caves and their astonishing paleolithic paintings in 1940, and the importance of their discovery was swiftly recognized.

Lascaux has been closed to the public since 1963 because of deterioration, but an exact copy has been created a few minutes' walk down the hillside, using the same materials. The replica is beautiful and should not be spurned: high-antlered elk, bison, bulls, and plump horses cover the walls, surrounded by arrows and geometric symbols thought to have had ritual significance.

Bergerac ⑧

Dordogne. 👥 *28,000.* ✈ 🚉 🚌 ℹ *97 rue Neuve d'Argenson (05 53 57 03 11).* 🛒 *Wed & Sat.* **www**.bergerac-tourisme.com

This small port, a tobacco farming and commercial center, spreads itself over both sides of the Dordogne. Chief attractions are its extraordinary **Musée du Tabac** (tobacco museum), and its food and wine which are invariably excellent. Bergerac's most celebrated wine is Monbazillac, a sweet white wine, often drunk on ceremonial occasions. On show in the small, lively museum are some Native American pipes.

🏛 **Musée du Tabac**
Maison Peyrarède, pl du Feu.
Tel *05 53 63 04 13.* ○ *Tue–Sun.* ● *Sun ams (mid-Nov–mid-Mar: Sat & Sun), public hols.* 💶 ♿

Les Eyzies ⑨

Dordogne. 👥 *900.* 🚉 ℹ *19 av de la Préhistoire (05 53 06 97 05).* 🛒 *Mon (Apr–Oct).* **www**.leseyzies.com

Four major prehistoric sites and a group of smaller caves cluster around the unassuming village of Les Eyzies. Head first for the **Musée National de Préhistoire**, in a new building at the foot of a 16th-century castle overlooking the village. The timelines and other exhibits are useful for putting the vast warren of prehistoric painting and sculpture into context.

The **Grotte de Font de Gaume** is the logical first stop after the museum at Les Eyzies. This cave, discovered in 1901, contains probably the finest ensemble of prehistoric paintings still open to the public in France.

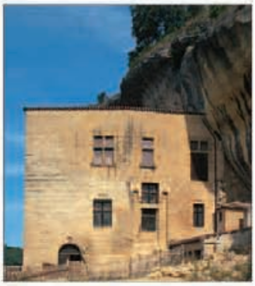
Close by is the **Grotte des Combarelles**, with engravings of bison, reindeer, magic symbols, and human figures.

Les Eyzies, a center for the area's concentration of prehistoric caves

Farther on, you reach the rock shelter of **Abri du Cap Blanc**, discovered in 1909, with a rare, lifesize frieze of horses and bison sculpted in the rock.

On the other side of Les Eyzies is the cave system at **Rouffignac**, a favorite place for excursions since the 15th century. There are 5 miles (8 km) of caves here, 1.5 miles (2.5 km) of which are served by electric train. The paintings include drawings of mammoths and a frieze of two bison challenging each other to combat.

Tickets for all the caves sell out fast, especially in summer, so arrive early. Some must be reserved two weeks ahead.



Musée National de Préhistoire

🏛 **Musée National de Préhistoire**
Tel *05 53 06 45 65.* ○ *Jul & Aug: daily; Sep–Jun: Wed–Mon.*
● *Jan 1, Dec 25.* 📷 ♿ 🛍 🎧

Grotte de Font de Gaume
Tel *05 53 06 86 00.* ○ *Sun–Fri by appt; reserve 2 months in advance.*
● *some public hols.*

Grotte des Combarelles
Tel *05 53 06 86 00.* ○ *Sun–Fri; reserve fortnight in advance.*
● *some public hols.* 📷

Abri du Cap Blanc
Marquay, Les Eyzies. ***Tel*** *05 53 06 86 00.* ○ *Apr–Oct: daily.* ● *some public hols.* 📷 ♿

Grotte de Rouffignac
Tel *05 53 05 41 71.* ○ *Apr–Oct: daily.* 📷 ♿

View of Domme from the medieval gateway of Porte de la Combe

Dordogne Valley ⑩

Dordogne. ✈ *Bergerac.* 🚉 *Bergerac, Le Buisson de Cadouin.* 🚌 *Beynac.* ℹ *Le Buisson de Cadouin (05 53 22 06 09)*

Probably no river in France crosses so varied a landscape and such different geological formations as the Dordogne. Starting in deep granite gorges in the Massif Central, it continues through fertile lowlands, then enters the limestone Causse country around Souillac. By the time the Dordogne has wound down to the Garonne, it is almost 2 miles (3 km) wide.

Don't be put off by the valley's touristy image. It is a beautiful area for wandering. Several villages make good stopping-off points, such as Limeuil, Beynac, and La Roque-Gageac from where *gabarres* (river boats) ferry visitors (Easter–Oct).

Perched high above the river, southwest of Sarlat, is the 17th-century **Château de Marqueyssac**. Its topiary park offers panoramic views from Domme to Beynac, and of the Château de Castelnaud on the opposite river bank.

Sarlat ⑪

See pp432–3.

Domme ⑫

Dordogne. 👥 *1,030.* ℹ *pl de la Halle (05 53 31 71 00).* 🛒 *Thu.*
www.ot-domme.com

Henry Miller wrote, "Just to glimpse the black, mysterious river at Domme from the beautiful bluff…is something to be grateful for all one's life." Domme itself is a neat bastide *(see p445)* of golden stone, with medieval gateways still standing. People come here to admire the view, which takes in the Dordogne valley from Beynac in the west to Montfort in the east, and wander the maze of old streets inside the walls. There is also a large cavern under the 17th-century covered market where the inhabitants hid at perilous moments during the Hundred Years' War and the 16th-century Wars of Religion. Despite a seemingly impregnable position, 30 intrepid Huguenots managed to capture Domme by scaling the cliffs under cover of night and opening the gates.

A *cingle* (loop) of the river Dordogne, seen from the town of Domme

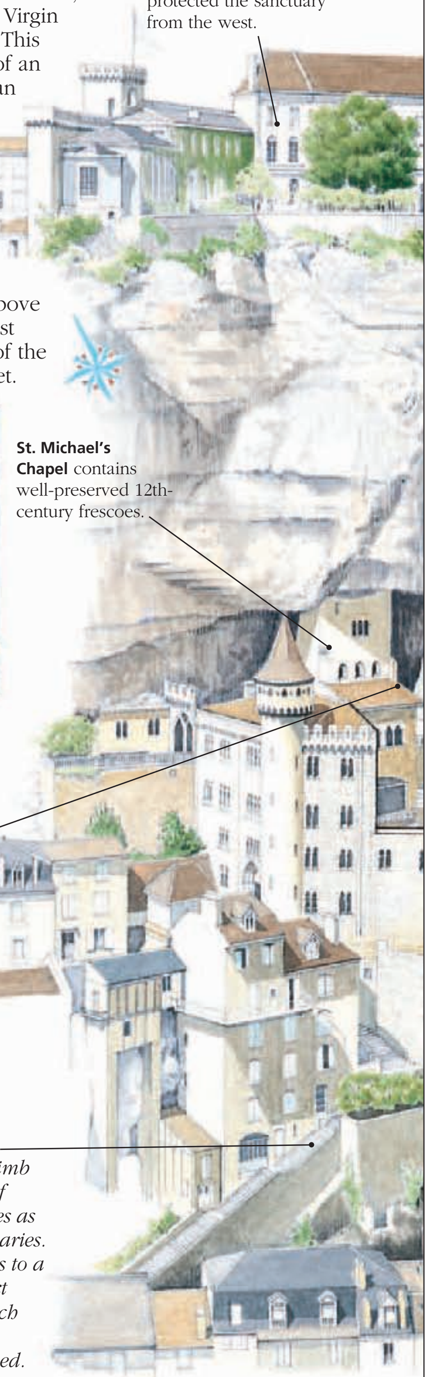
Rocamadour ⑬

Black Virgin and Child

Rocamadour became one of the most famous centers of pilgrimage following a spate of miracles heralded, it is claimed, by the bell above the Black Virgin and Child in the Chapel of Notre-Dame. This was followed by the discovery in 1166 of an ancient grave and sepulchre containing an undecayed body, said to be that of the early Christian hermit St-Amadour. Although the town suffered with the decline of pilgrimages in the 17th and 18th centuries, it was heavily restored in the 19th century. Still a holy shrine, as well as a popular tourist destination, Rocamadour's site on a rocky plateau above the Alzou valley is phenomenal. The best views are to be had from the ramparts of the château, reached from the hamlet of L'Hospitalet.

General View

Rocamadour is at its most breathtaking in the sunlight of early morning: the cluster of medieval houses, towers, and battlements seems to sprout from the base of the cliff.



The Château stands on the site of a fort which protected the sanctuary from the west.

St. Michael's Chapel contains well-preserved 12th-century frescoes.

The Tomb of St-Amadour once held the body of the hermit called *roc amator* (lover of rock), from whom the town took its name.

Grand Stairway

Pilgrims would climb this broad flight of steps on their knees as they said their rosaries. The stairway leads to a square on the next level, around which the main pilgrim chapels are grouped.

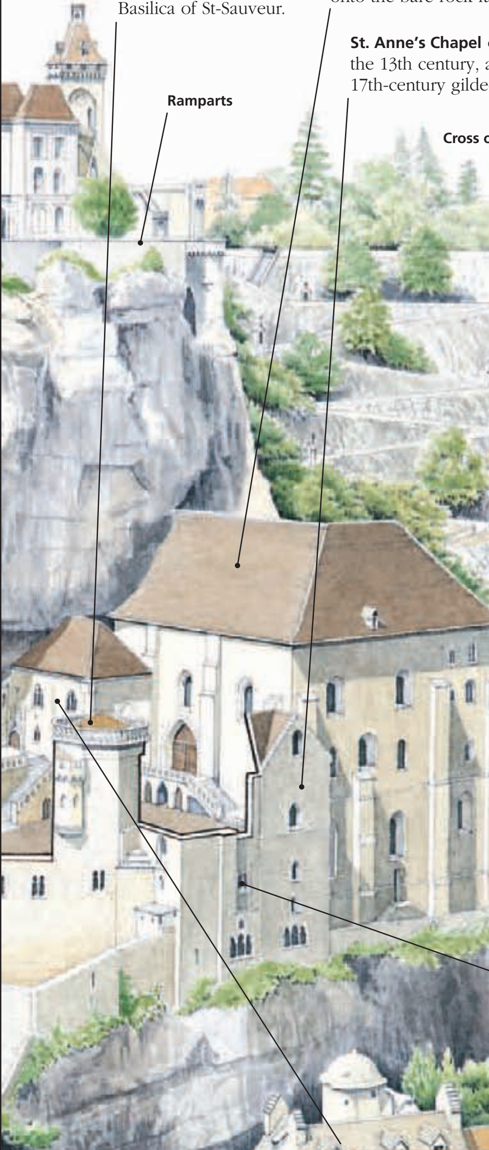
VISITORS' CHECKLIST

Lot. 👥 *630.* 🚉 *3 miles (5 km) SW Rocamadour.* ℹ *Maison du Tourisme (05 65 33 22 00).*

Chapel of Notre-Dame

○ *Jun–Sep: 8am–9pm; Oct–May: 8:30am–6:30pm.* 📷

www.rocamadour.com



The Chapel of St. John the Baptist faces the fine Gothic portal of the Basilica of St-Sauveur.

The Basilica of St-Sauveur, a late 12th-century sanctuary, backs onto the bare rock face.

St. Anne's Chapel dates from the 13th century, and contains a 17th-century gilded altar screen.

Ramparts

Cross of Jerusalem

Chapel of St-Blaise (13th century)

Stations of the Cross
Pilgrims encounter the Cross of Jerusalem and 14 stations marking Jesus's journey to the Cross on their way up the hillside to the château.

Rocamadour Town
Now a pedestrian precinct, its main street is lined with souvenir stores to tempt the throngs of pilgrims.

Chapel of Notre-Dame (Miracles)
St-Amadour's body was found in the cliff, near the Black Virgin Chapel. A statue of the Black Virgin, the supreme object of veneration, stands on the altar.

Gouffre de Padirac ⑭

Lot. ***Tel** 05 65 33 64 56.*
○ *mid-Mar–mid-Nov: daily.*
www.gouffre-de-padirac.com

Formed by the collapse of a cave, this huge crater measures 115 ft (35 m) wide and 337 ft (103 m) deep. The underground river and stunning succession of galleries *(see p403)* were discovered in 1889. The immense Salle du Grand Dôme dwarfs the tallest of cathedrals. Bring a jacket, since the cave is 55° F.

Autoire ⑮

Lot. *350.* ℹ *Saint Céré (05 65 38 11 85).*

This is one of the loveliest places in Quercy, the fertile area east of Périgord. There are no grand monuments or dramatic history, just a beautifully unspoiled site at the mouth of the Autoire gorge. The **Château de Limarque** on the main square, and the **Château de Busqueille** overlooking it, are both built in characteristic Quercy style, with turrets and towers. Elsewhere, elaborate dovecotes typical of the region stand in fields or are attached to houses.

Outside Autoire, past a 100-ft (30-m) waterfall, a path climbs to a rock amphitheater, giving panoramic views of the region.

The picturesque village of Autoire, seen from across the gorge

Cahors ⑯

Lot. *21,500.*
ℹ *pl François Mitterrand (05 65 53 20 65).* *Wed & Sat am.*
www.tourisme-cahors.com

The capital of the Lot *département*, Cahors is renowned for its dark, heady wine, which was produced as far back as Roman times. It is also famous for being the birthplace of the statesman Léon Gambetta (1838–82), who led France to recovery after the war with Prussia in 1870. The main street of Cahors – like many towns in France – is named after him.

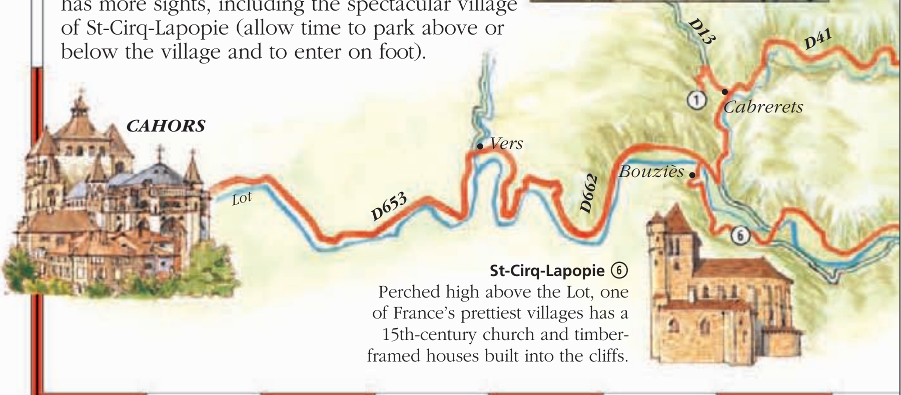
Cathédrale de St-Etienne, entrenched behind the narrow streets of Cahors' Old Town, dates back to 1119. It has some fine medieval details: don't miss the lively figures of the Romanesque north door and tympanum, which depict the Ascension, or the huge cupola above the nave (said

A Tour of Two Rivers

Flanked by spectacular limestone cliffs, the beautiful Lot and Célé valleys feature ancient medieval villages and castles, narrow gorges, and rushing waterfalls along lazy stretches of river. An unhurried tour of both valleys, around 100 miles (160 km), is best spread over two days to savor the gastronomic delights and the superb views.

From Cahors, the route follows the Lot, then meanders slowly up the peaceful and picturesque Célé valley to reach Figeac, a handsome town full of charming stores, cafés, and restaurants. The return route is via the busier Lot Valley, which has more sights, including the spectacular village of St-Cirq-Lapopie (allow time to park above or below the village and to enter on foot).

Grotte de Pech-Merle ①
This 25,000-year-old prehistoric site outside Cabrerets has huge chambers painted with mammoths, horses, bison, and human figures.



St-Cirq-Lapopie ⑥
Perched high above the Lot, one of France's prettiest villages has a 15th-century church and timber-framed houses built into the cliffs.

to be the largest in France). They are covered in 14th-century frescoes depicting the stoning of St. Stephen (St-Étienne). The Renaissance cloisters are decorated with some intricate, though damaged, carvings.

Also worth seeking out in the cathedral quarter is the ornate 16th-century **Maison de Roaldès**, its north façade decorated with tree, sun, and rose of Quercy motifs. It was here that Henri of Navarre (who later became King Henri IV) stayed for one night in 1580 after besieging and capturing Cahors.

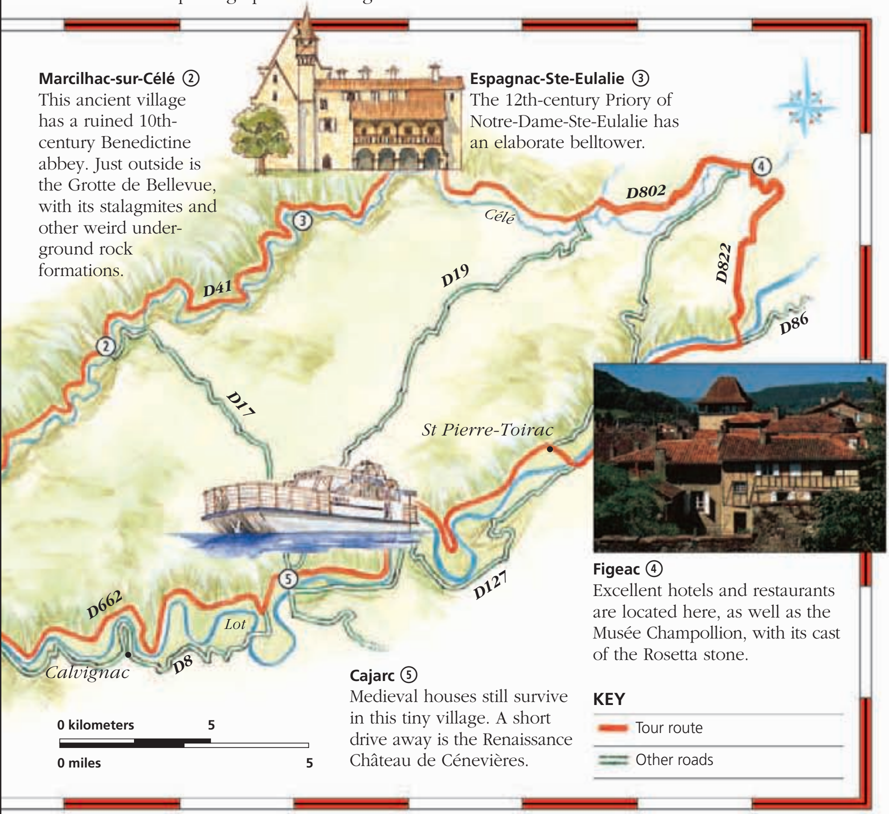
The fortified Pont Valentré spanning the river Lot at Cahors

The town's landmark monument is the **Pont Valentré**, a fortified bridge with seven pointed arches and three towers that spans the river. It was built between 1308 and 1360, and has withstood many attacks since then. A breathtaking sight, it is claimed that the bridge is one of the most photographed monuments in the whole of France. An alternative way to enjoy the scenery is to take a leisurely 90-minute boat trip through the lock from a wharf near the bridge (Apr–Oct).

Environs

Cahors makes a good base from which to explore the sights of the Lot. Visit the historic towns of Figeac, birthplace of Jean-François Champollion who first deciphered Egyptian hieroglyphs, and the **Grotte de Pech-Merle** with its extraordinary painted walls.

Grotte de Pech-Merle
Cabrerets. ***Tel*** *05 65 31 27 05.*
○ *Apr–Oct daily.*



Marcilhac-sur-Célé ②
This ancient village has a ruined 10th-century Benedictine abbey. Just outside is the Grotte de Bellevue, with its stalagmites and other weird underground rock formations.

Espagnac-Ste-Eulalie ③
The 12th-century Priory of Notre-Dame-Ste-Eulalie has an elaborate belltower.

Figeac ④
Excellent hotels and restaurants are located here, as well as the Musée Champollion, with its cast of the Rosetta stone.

Cajarc ⑤
Medieval houses still survive in this tiny village. A short drive away is the Renaissance Château de Cénevières.

KEY

🟥 Tour route

🟩 Other roads

Orchards and vineyards outside Agen

Agen ⑰

Lot-et-Garonne. 👥 *35,000.* ✈ 🚆 🚌 ℹ *38 rue Garonne (05 53 47 36 09).* ⛁ *Tue–Sun.* **www**.ot-agen.org

Vast orchards of regimented plum trees – producing the celebrated *pruneaux d'Agen* – characterize the landscape around this small provincial city. Crusaders returning from the Middle East brought the fruit to France in the 11th century, and monks in the Lot valley nearby were the first to dry plums for prunes in commercial quantities.

Agen's **Musée Municipal des Beaux-Arts** contains paintings by Goya, including his *Ascent in a Hot-Air Balloon,* Sisley's *September Morning*, Corot's landscape *L'étang de Ville d'Avray*, and works by Picabia. Undisputed jewel of the collection is the *Vénus du Mas*, a beautifully proportioned marble statue dating from the 1st century BC, discovered nearby in 1876.

🏛 **Musée Municipal des Beaux-Arts**
Pl du Docteur Esquirol. ***Tel*** *05 53 69 47 23.* ○ *Wed–Mon.* ● *Jan 1, May 1, Nov 1, Dec 25.* 📷

Environs

The fortified village of Moirax, 5 miles (8 km) south of Agen, has a 12th-century Romanesque church of great beauty and symmetry. Two of the appealingly sculpted capitals depict biblical accounts of Daniel in the lions' den, and Original Sin.

The bastide town *(see p445)* of Villeneuve-sur-Lot, 21 miles (34 km) south of Agen, stands astride the River Lot. It has a tall, 14th-century tower that once formed a defensive gateway. The red-brick Romano-Byzantine church of Ste-Catherine was built in 1909 but contains restored 15th-century stained-glass windows. Just to the east of Villeneuve is the pretty medieval hilltop village of Penne D'Agenais.

ARMAGNAC

Armagnac is one of the world's most expensive brandies. It is also one of the leading products of southwest France: approximately 6 million bottles are produced annually, 45 percent of which are exported to 132 countries. The vineyards of Armagnac roughly straddle the border between the Gers and the Lot-et-Garonne regions and the Landes. Similar in style to Cognac, its more famous neighbor, Armagnac's single distillation leaves more individual flavors in the spirit. The majority of small, independent producers offer direct sale to the public: look out for the battered, often half-hidden farm signs advertising *Vente Directe.*

A Tenarèze Armagnac

Larressingle ⑱

Gers. 👥 *150.* 🚌 *to Condom.* ℹ *Condom (05 62 28 00 80).*

With its ramparts, ruined donjon (defense tower), and fortress gate, Larressingle is a tiny fortified village in the middle of the Gascon countryside. It dates from the 13th century, and is one of the last remaining Gascon villages with its walls still intact. The state of preservation is unique, and gives an idea of what life must have been like for the small, embattled local communities who had to live for decades under conditions of perpetual warfare.

Condom ⑲

Gers. 👥 *7,400.* 🚌 ℹ *pl Bossuet (05 62 28 00 80).* ⛁ *Wed, Sat am.*

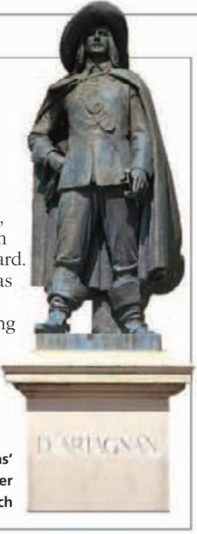
Long a center for the Armagnac trade, Condom is a market town built around the late-Gothic **Cathédrale St-Pierre**. In 1569 during the Wars of Religion, the Huguenot (French Protestant) army threatened to demolish the cathedral, but Condom's citizens averted this by paying a huge ransom.

The river Baïse skirts the town center. Notable among Condom's fine 17th–18th-century mansions is the **Hôtel de Cugnac** on rue Jean-Jaurès, with its ancient *chai* (wine and spirit storehouse) and distillery. On the other side of the town center, the **Musée de l'Armagnac** is the place to find out, finally, what the difference between the brandy of Armagnac and Cognac really is.

🏛 **Musée de l'Armagnac**
2 rue Jules Ferry. ***Tel*** *05 62 28 47 17.* ○ *Apr–Oct: Wed–Mon; Nov–Mar: Wed–Sun pms.* ● *Jan, public hols.* 📷 ♿ *ground floor.*

D'ARTAGNAN

Gascons call their domain the "Pays d'Artagnan" after Alexandre Dumas' rollicking hero from *The Three Musketeers* (1844). The character of d'Artagnan was based on Charles de Batz, a typical Gascon whose chivalry, passion, and impetuousness made him ideal as a musketeer, or royal bodyguard. De Batz's life was as fast and furious as that of the fictional hero, and he performed a feat of courtliness by arresting Louis XIV's most formidable minister without causing the slightest offense. The French have other opinions on the Gascon nature, too: a *promesse de Gascon,* for example, means an empty promise.

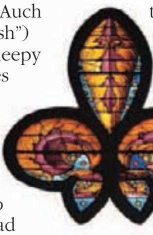


Statue of Dumas' musketeer d'Artagnan in Auch

Auch ⑳

Gers. 👥 *23,500.* 🚉 🚌 ℹ *1 rue Dessoles (05 62 05 22 89).* 🛒 *Thu & Sat.* **www**.auch-tourisme.com

The ancient capital of the Gers department, Auch (pronounced "Ohsh") has long been a sleepy place which comes alive on market days. The new town by the station is not a place which encourages you to linger. Head instead for the Old Town on the outcrop overlooking the river Gers. If you climb the 234 stone steps from the river, you arrive directly in front of the restored late-Gothic **Cathédrale Ste-Marie**, begun in 1489. The furnishings of the cathedral are remarkable: highlights are the carved wooden choir stalls depicting more than 1,500 biblical, historical, and mythological characters, and the equally magnificent 15th-century stained glass, attributed to Arnaud de Moles. The windows show a mix of prophets, patriarchs, and apostles, with 360 individually characterized figures and exceptional colors. Three depict the key biblical events of Creation, the Crucifixion, and the Resurrection.



Medallion from Cathédrale Ste-Marie

Auch went through an urbanization program in the 18th century, when the allées d'Etigny, flanked by the grand Hôtel de Ville and Palais de Justice, were built. Some fine houses from this period line the pedestrianized rue Dessoles. Auch's restaurants are known for their hearty dishes, including *foie gras de canard* (fattened duck liver).

Auvillar ㉑

Tarn-et-Garonne. 👥 *1,000.* ℹ *pl de la Halle (05 63 39 89 82).*

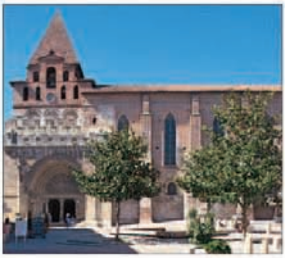
A perfect complement to the high emotion of Moissac *(see pp442–3)*, Auvillar is one of the loveliest hilltop villages in France. It has a triangular marketplace lined with half-timbered arcades at its center, and extensive views from the promenade overlooking the river Garonne. There are picnic spots along this panoramic path plus an orientation map. This includes all but the chimneys visible in the distance, belonging to the nuclear plant at Golfech.

Sunflowers, a popular crop in southwest France grown for their seeds and oil

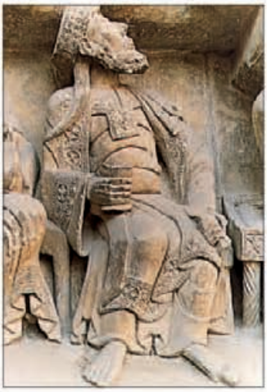
Moissac ㉒

Abbot Durand

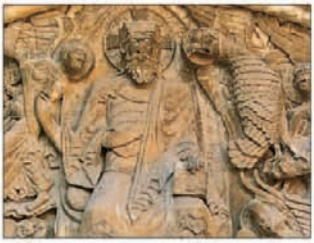
At the core of this otherwise unremarkable riverside town is the abbey of St-Pierre, one of the undisputed masterpieces of French Romanesque art. Founded in the 7th century by a Benedictine monk, the abbey was subsequently ransacked by Arabs, Normans, and Hungarians. In 1047, Moissac abbey was united with the rich foundation at Cluny and prospered under the direction of Abbot Durand de Bredon. By the 12th century it had become the pre-eminent monastery in southwest France. The superb south portal was created during this period.

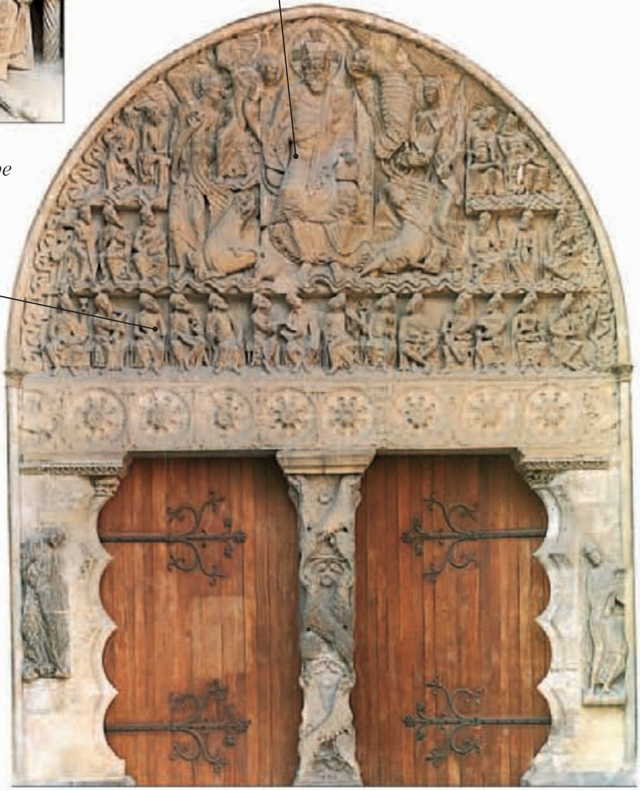


Abbey of St-Pierre
The church's exterior belongs to two periods: one part (in stone) is Romanesque, the other (in brick) is Gothic.



Christ in Majesty
The figure of Christ sits in judgment at the center of the scene. He holds the Book of Life in His left hand and raises His right in benediction.





Tympanum
The lower register of the balanced, compact tympanum shows the expressive "24 Elders with crowns of gold" from St. John's vision.

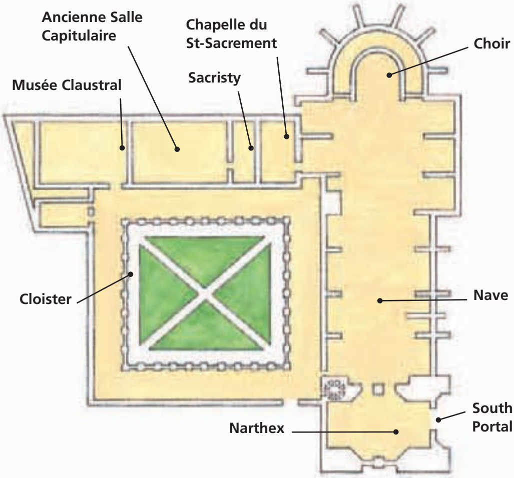
★ South Portal
The carved south portal (1100–1130) is a masterful translation into stone of St. John's dramatic vision of the Apocalypse (Book of Revelation, Chapters 4 and 5). The Evangelists Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John appear as "four beasts full of eyes." Moorish details on the door jambs reflect the contemporary cultural exchange between France and Spain.

VISITORS' CHECKLIST

Tarn-et-Garonne. 👥 *13,000.* 🚆 🚌 ℹ *6 pl Durand de Bredon (05 63 04 01 85).* 🛒 *Sat, Sun ams.* **Abbey** *Contact tourist office for access.* ○ *9am–6pm daily.* **Cloisters** ○ *10am–noon Mon–Fri, 2–5pm daily.* ✝ *6:30pm Mon–Fri, 7pm Sat, 10:30am Sun.* 📷 ♿

★ Cloister
The late 11th-century cloister is lined with alternate double and single columns in white, pink, green, and gray marble. In all, there are 76 richly decorated arches.

FLOOR PLAN: CHURCH AND CLOISTER



Cloister Capitals
Flowers, beasts, and scenes from both the Old and New Testaments are featured in these superbly sculptured 11th-century Romanesque capitals.

STAR FEATURES

- ★ South Portal
- ★ Cloister

Montauban ㉓

Tarn-et-Garonne. 👥 *56,000.* 🚆 🚌 ℹ *4 rue du Collège (05 63 63 60 60).* 🛒 *Sat, Wed.* **www**.montauban-tourisme.com

Montauban deserves more attention than it usually gets, as Toulouse's little pink-brick sister and the capital of the 17th-century "Protestant Republic" of southern France. The painter Ingres was born here in 1780, and the town's great treasure is the **Musée Ingres**, a 17th-century palace with an exceptional bequest of paintings and 4,000 drawings, plus works by Van Dyck, Tintoretto, Courbet, and sculptor Emile Bourdelle, an associate of Rodin, also from here.

Above all, Montauban is a civilized shopping center, with a double-arcaded main square (place Nationale) built in the 17th and 18th centuries. A few streets away lies the stark white **Cathédrale Notre-Dame**, built on the orders of Louis XIV in 1692, in the backlash against Protestant heresy.

🏛 Musée Ingres
Palais Episcopal, 13 rue de l'Hôtel de Ville. ***Tel*** *05 63 22 12 91.* ○ *Tue–Sun (Jul–Aug: daily).* ● *Jan 1, Jul 14, Nov 1 & 11, Dec 25.* ♿

Gorges de l'Aveyron ㉔

Tarn-et-Garonne. ✈ *Toulouse.* 🚆 *Montauban, Lexos.* 🚌 *Montauban.* ℹ *Montauban (05 63 63 60 60).*

At the Gorges de l'Aveyron, the sweltering plains of Montauban change to cool, wooded hills. Here the villages are of a different stamp from those of Périgord and Quercy, displaying an obsession with defense.

The château at Bruniquel, founded in the 6th century, is built over the lip of a precipice, reached by a steep walk through the village. Farther along the D115, the village of Penne's position on the tip of a giant rock fang is even more extreme. The gorge narrows and darkens; from St-Antonin-Noble-Val, clamped to its rock face, the valley turns toward Cordes.

Cordes ㉕

Tarn. 👥 *1,050.* 🚆 🚌 ℹ *pl Jeanne Ramel-Cals (05 63 56 00 52).* 🛒 *Sat.*
www.cordessurciel.eu

Sometimes known as Cordes-sur-Ciel, this is a fitting description since the town seems suspended against the skyline. During the 13th-century Cathar wars the entire town was excommunicated. Devastating epidemics of plague later sent it into decline, and the town was in an advanced state of decay at the beginning of the 20th century.

Restoration work began in the 1940s and the ramparts and many of the gates built in 1222 have been well preserved. Also intact are Gothic houses like the 14th-century **Maison du Grand Fauconnier**.

Today, Cordes still exudes a sense of loss. The town of which Albert Camus wrote “Everything is beautiful there, even regret,” is now dependent on tourism. “Medieval” crafts aimed at visitors abound and a collection at the **Musée d’Art Moderne et Contemporain** evokes Cordes’ former embroidery industry. It also houses works of modern art by such artists as Picasso and Miro. The **Jardin des Paradis** offers a corner of beauty and hope.

🏛 Musée d’Art Moderne et Contemporain
Maison du Grand Fauconnier.
Tel *05 63 56 14 79.*
○ *daily.*
● *Jan.* 🚫📷 🛍

Cathédrale Ste-Cécile perched above the town of Albi

Albi ㉖

Tarn. 👥 *51,000.* 🚆 🚌
ℹ *pl Ste-Cécile (05 63 49 48 80).*
🛒 *Sat.* **www**.albi-tourisme.fr

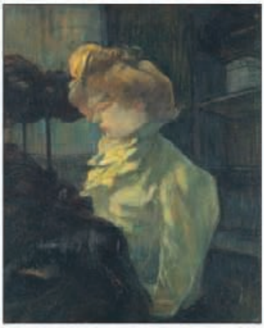
Like many another large town in this region, Albi is not only red, but also red hot, and definitely not for afternoon visits. You need to get up in the cool early morning to walk the streets around the market and the cathedral.

Then make for the **Musée Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec** in the Palais de la Berbie ahead of the crowds. The museum contains the most complete permanent collection of the artist’s work in existence, including paintings, drawings, and his famous posters for the Moulin-Rouge. There are also canvases by Matisse, Dufy and Yves Brayer. After a stroll around the beautiful terraced gardens, step next door to the vast red-brick **Cathédrale Ste-Cécile**, built in the aftermath of the Albigensian crusade in 1265. It was intended as a reminder to potential heretics that the Church meant business. From a distance, its semicircular towers and narrow windows give it the appearance more of a fortress than a place of worship. Every feature, from the huge belltower to the apocalyptic fresco of the *Last Judgement*, is on a giant scale, built deliberately to dwarf the average person. The effect is breathtaking.

🏛 Musée Toulouse-Lautrec
Palais de la Berbie.
Tel *05 63 49 48 70.*
○ *Apr–Sep: daily; Oct–Mar: Wed–Mon.*
● *Jan 1,May 1, Nov 1, Dec 25.*
🚫📷 ♿ 🛍 🎧
www.musee-toulouse-lautrec.com

TOULOUSE-LAUTREC

Comte Henri de Toulouse–Lautrec was born in Albi in 1864. Crippled at 15 as a result of two falls, he moved to Paris in 1882, recording the life of the city’s cabarets, brothels, racecourses, and circuses. A dedicated craftsman, his bold, vivid posters did much to establish lithography as a major art form. Alcoholism and syphilis led to his early death at the age of 36.



Lautrec’s *La Modiste* (1900)

Castres ㉗

Tarn. 👥 *45,500* ✈ 🚆 🚌
ℹ *2 pl de la République (05 63 62 63 62).* 🛒 *Tue–Sun.*
www.tourisme-castres.fr

Castres has been a center for the cloth industry since the 14th century. Today it is also the headquarters of one of France’s biggest pharmaceutical companies. In the large collection of Spanish art in the **Musée Goya**, the artist himself is well represented by a large, misty council scene and by a series of powerful prints, *Los Caprichos*. Outside, the formal gardens between the town hall and the river Agout were designed in the 17th century by Le Nôtre *(see p179)*, the landscape architect of Vaux-le-Vicomte and Versailles.

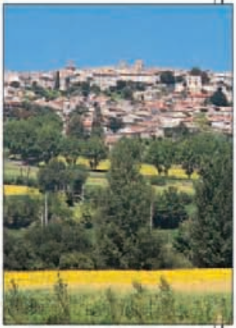
🏛 Musée Goya
Hôtel de Ville. ***Tel*** *05 63 71 59 30 or 05 63 71 59 27.* ○ *Jul–Aug: daily; Sep–Jun: Tue–Sun.* ● *Jan 1, May 1, Nov 1, Dec 25.* 🚫📷

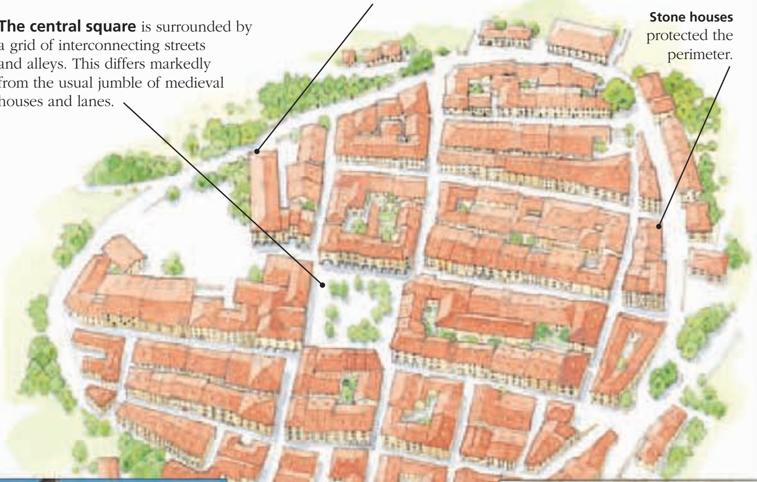
Bastide Towns

Bastide towns were hurriedly built in the 13th century by both the English and the French, to encourage settlement of empty areas before the Hundred Years' War. They are the medieval equivalent of "new towns, "with their planned grid of streets and fortified perimeters. Over 300 bastide towns and villages still survive between Périgord and the Pyrenees.

A broad arcaded marketplace *is the central feature of most bastides. Montauban's arcades still shelter a variety of stores.*

Lauzerte, *founded in 1241 by the Count of Toulouse, is a typical bastide town of gray stone houses. The town, long an English outpost, is perched for security on the brow of a hill.*





The church could be used as a keep when the bastide's outer fortifications had been breached.

The central square is surrounded by a grid of interconnecting streets and alleys. This differs markedly from the usual jumble of medieval houses and lanes.

Stone houses protected the perimeter.

MONFLANQUIN

This military bastide town was built by the French in 1256 on a strategic north–south route. It changed hands several times during the Hundred Years' War.

Today, the bastides *form a convenient network of market towns, known as the* route des bastides. *The best time to visit them is on market day, when the central squares are crammed with stalls.*

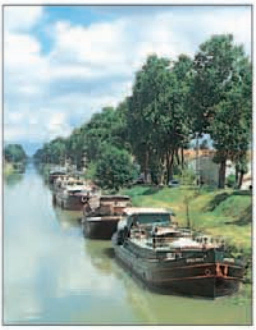
Porte de la Jane *in Cordes is a typical bastide feature. These narrow gateways were easily barred by portcullises.*

Toulouse ㉘

Toulouse, the most important town in southwest France, is the country's fourth largest metropolis and a major industrial and university city. The area is also famous for its aerospace industry (Concorde, Airbus, and the Ariane space rocket all originated here), as shown by the Cité de l'Espace just outside the city.

Best seen on foot, Toulouse has fine regional cuisine, two striking cathedrals, lively street life, and a rose-brick Old Town which, as the French say, is "pink at dawn, red at noon, and mauve at dusk."

The river Garonne, crossed by the Pont Neuf



Houseboats at their moorings on the Canal du Midi

Exploring Toulouse

This warm southern city has steadily expanded, crescent-like, from its original Roman site on the Garonne. First it was a flourishing Visigoth city, then a Renaissance town of towered brick palaces built with the wealth generated by the *pastel* (blue pigment) and grain trades. The grandest of these palaces still survive in the Old Town, centered around Place du Capitole and the huge 18th-century **Hôtel de Ville**. Here, and in place St-Georges and rue Alsace-Lorraine, is the main concentration of stores, bars, and cafés. The city's large student population keeps prices down in the numerous cafés, oyster bars, and bookstores, and in the fleamarket, held on Sundays in place St-Sernin.

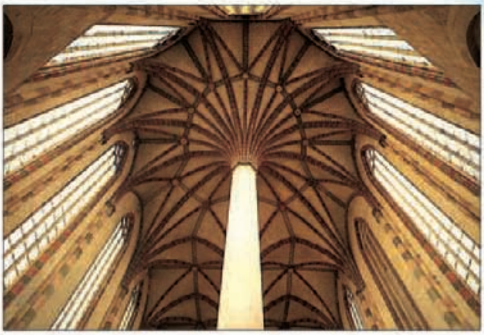
A ring of 18th- and 19th-century boulevards encircles the city, surrounded in turn by a tangle of autoroutes. The left bank of the Garonne is under development (St-Cyprien) and is linked by Toulouse's new driverless metro. The former abattoir has been superbly converted into a center for modern and contemporary art, **Les Abattoirs** (Wed–Sun), the highlight of which is Picasso's theater backdrop *Minotaur disguised as Harlequin*.

Les Jacobins

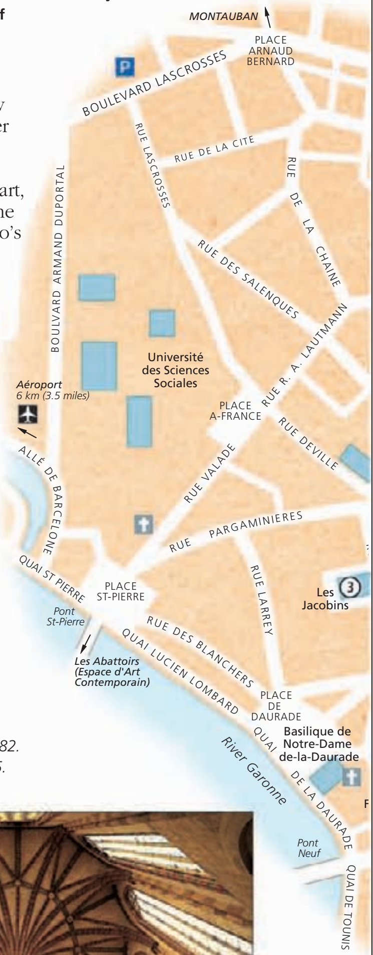
This church was begun in 1229 and completed over the next two centuries. It was the first Dominican convent founded to combat dissent. The Jacobins' convent became the founding institution of Toulouse University. Its church, a Gothic masterpiece, features a soaring, 22-branched palm tree vault in the apse. The delicate Gothic Chapelle St-Antonin (1337) contains frescoes of the Apocalypse dating from 1341.

Musée des Augustins

21 rue de Metz. ***Tel*** *05 61 22 21 82.*
○ *daily.* ● *Jan 1, May 1, Dec 25.*
♿ **www.**augustins.org



Palm vaulting in the apse of Les Jacobins


MONTAUBAN
PLACE ARNAUD BERNARD
BOULEVARD LASCROSSES
RUE LASCROSSES
RUE DE LA CITE
RUE DE LA CHAINE
BOULVARD ARMAND DUPORTAL
RUE DES SALENQUES
RUE R. A. LAUTMANN
Université des Sciences Sociales
Aéroport 6 km (3.5 miles)
PLACE A-FRANCE
RUE DEVILLE
ALLE DE BARCELONE
RUE VALADE
RUE PARGAMINIERES
QUAI ST PIERRE
PLACE ST-PIERRE
Pont St-Pierre
RUE LARREY
Les Jacobins ③
RUE DES BLANCHERS
QUAI LUCIEN LOMBARD
Les Abattoirs (Espace d'Art Contemporain)
PLACE DE DAURADE
Basilique de Notre-Dame de-la-Daurade
River Garonne
QUAI DE LA DAURADE
Pont Neuf
QUAI DE TOUNIS

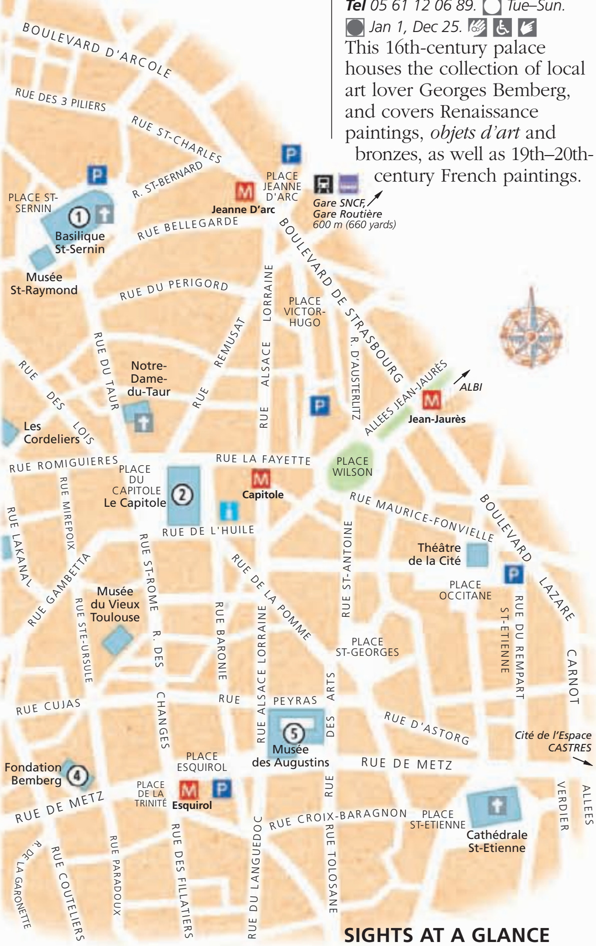
Toulouse became a center of Romanesque art owing to its position on the route to Santiago de Compostela *(see p400)*. The museum has sculpture from the period and 12th-century Romanesque capitals, as well as cloisters from a 14th-century Augustinian priory. There are also 16th–19th-century French, Italian, and Flemish paintings here, including work by Ingres, Delacroix, Constant, and Laurens.

Façade of Musée des Augustins

⌂ Fondation Bemberg

Hôtel d'Assézat, 7 pl d'Assézat. ***Tel*** *05 61 12 06 89.* ○ *Tue–Sun.* ● *Jan 1, Dec 25.* ♿

This 16th-century palace houses the collection of local art lover Georges Bemberg, and covers Renaissance paintings, *objets d'art* and bronzes, as well as 19th–20th-century French paintings.


BOULEVARD D'ARCOLE
RUE DES 3 PILIERS
RUE ST-CHARLES
R. ST-BERNARD
PLACE ST-SERNIN
Basilique St-Sernin
①
PLACE JEANNE D'ARC
Jeanne D'arc
Gare SNCF, Gare Routière 600 m (660 yards)
RUE BELLEGARDE
BOULEVARD DE STRASBOURG
Musée St-Raymond
RUE DU PERIGORD
RUE ALSACE LORRAINE
PLACE VICTOR-HUGO
R. D'AUSTERLITZ
ALLEES JEAN-JAURES
ALBI
Jean-Jaurès
RUE DU TAUR
Notre-Dame-du-Taur
RUE REMUSAT
RUE DES LOIS
Les Cordeliers
RUE ROMIGUIERES
PLACE DU CAPITOLE
Le Capitole
②
RUE LA FAYETTE
Capitole
PLACE WILSON
RUE MAURICE-FONVIELLE
BOULEVARD LAZARE CARNOT
RUE MIREPOIX
RUE LAKANAL
RUE DE L'HUILE
RUE ST-ROME
RUE DE LA POMME
RUE ST-ANTOINE
Théâtre de la Cité
PLACE OCCITANE
RUE DU REMPART ST-ETIENNE
RUE GAMBETTA
Musée du Vieux Toulouse
RUE STE-URSULE
R. DES CHANGES
RUE BARONIE
RUE ALSACE LORRAINE
PLACE ST-GEORGES
RUE CUJAS
RUE PEYRAS
RUE DES ARTS
RUE D'ASTORG
Cité de l'Espace CASTRES
⑤
Musée des Augustins
PLACE ESQUIROL
RUE DE METZ
Fondation Bemberg
④
PLACE DE LA TRINITÉ
Esquirol
RUE DE METZ
RUE CROIX-BARAGNON
PLACE ST-ETIENNE
Cathédrale St-Etienne
ALLEES VERDIER
R. DE LA GARONNETTE
RUE COUTELIERS
RUE PARADOUX
RUE DES FILLATIERS
RUE DU LANGUEDOC
RUE TOLOSANE
0 meters 250
0 yards 250

SIGHTS AT A GLANCE

Basilique St-Sernin ①
Fondation Bemberg ④
Le Capitole ②
Les Jacobins ③
Musée des Augustins ⑤

Key to Symbols *see back flap*

VISITORS' CHECKLIST

Haute-Garonne. 👥 *445,000.* ✈ *3.5 miles (6 km) NW Toulouse.* 🚉 🚌 *bd Pierre Semard (trains: Gare Matabiau).* ℹ *Donjon du Capitole (05 61 11 02 22).* *daily.* *Piano aux Jacobins (Sep).* **www**.toulouse-tourisme.com

⛪ Basilique St-Sernin

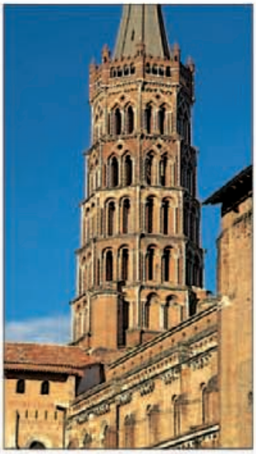
Pl St-Sernin. ***Tel*** *05 61 21 80 45.* ○ *daily.*

This is the largest Romanesque basilica in Europe, built in the 11th–12th centuries to accommodate pilgrims. Highlights are the octagonal brick belfry, with rows of decorative brick arches topped by an enormously tall spire. Beautiful 11th-century marble low reliefs of Christ and the symbols of the Evangelists by Bernard Gilduin are in the ambulatory.

🏛 Cité de l'Espace

Av Jean Gonord. ***Tel*** *08 20 37 72 23.* ○ *Tue–Sun.* ● *Jan.* ♿ 🍴 **www**.cite-espace.com

Southeast of the city center, this vast "space park" includes two planetariums, interactive exhibits related to space exploration, the Terradome "film-experience" on the history of the earth, an Imax theater, and a lifesize replica of the Ariane 5 rocket, where visitors can learn how, in theory at least, to launch rockets and satellites.



The tiered, 12th-century tower of Basilique St-Sernin

KODAK
EN VENTE ICI
Sports
HOTEL
EUROPE
La Hutte
INTERSPORT
Hutte
gence
Ski
Chalet l'Oustal
SKI & SUMMER HOLIDAYS
SKIS
LOCATION
CENTRAL HOTEL
RESTAURANT

THE PYRENEES

PYRÉNÉES-ATLANTIQUES · HAUTES-PYRÉNÉES ARIÈGE · HAUTE-GARONNE

The mountains of the Pyrenees form a conspicuous frontier across southwestern France. Over centuries this remote terrain has fostered tenacious people, many descended from Spanish emigrants and refugees. Today it is the last remaining wilderness in southern Europe and a habitat for rare animal species.

Heading east from the Atlantic coast, the hills are wonderfully lush after the plains of Aquitaine. The deeper the Pyrenees are penetrated, the steeper the valley sides and the more gigantic the snow-clad peaks become. This is magnificent, empty, dangerous country, to be approached with caution and respect. In summer the region offers over 1,000 miles (1,600 km) of walking trails, as well as camping, fishing, and climbing. In winter there is both cross-country and downhill skiing at the busy resorts along the border, much livelier than their Spanish counterparts.

Historically, the Pyrenees are known as the birthplace of Henri IV, who put an end to the Wars of Religion in 1593 and united France, though the region has been characterized more often by independent fiefdoms. The region's oldest inhabitants, the Basque people *(see p455)* have maintained their own language and culture, and their resorts of Bayonne, Biarritz, and St-Jean-de-Luz reflect this, looking to the sea and to summer visitors for their livelihood.

Inland, Pau, Tarbes, and Foix rely on tourism and medium-scale industry, while Lourdes receives four million pilgrims every year. For the rest, life has been regulated by agriculture, though economic constraints today are causing an exodus from the land.

Countryside around St-Lizier, in the heart of the Pyrenean countryside

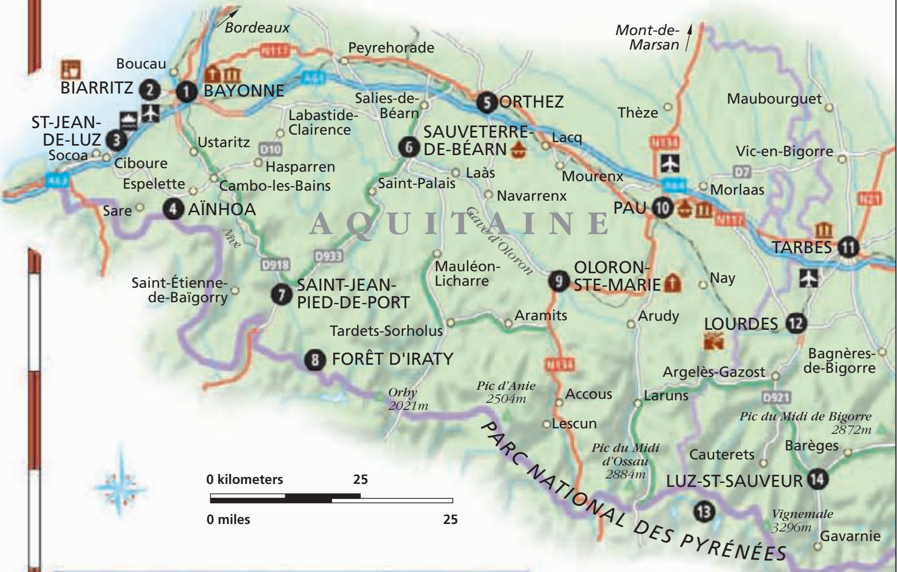
◁ **Barèges, a ski resort and spa town in the Hautes-Pyrénées**

Exploring the Pyrenees

The towering Pyrenees cut across southwest France from the Mediterranean to the Atlantic coast, encompassing the craggy citadel of Montségur, the pilgrimage center of Lourdes, Pau, capital of the hilly Béarn country, and the Basque port of Bayonne. This formidable range, an unspoiled paradise for walkers, fishermen, and skiers, is as lush on its French side as it is arid in Spain, and contains the wild and beautiful Parc National des Pyrénées. Throughout the region, visitors can expect cool temperatures and grandiose scenery. Lovers of history and architecture will be richly rewarded by St-Bertrand-de-Comminges and St-Jean-de-Luz, among the region's important sights.

Spécialités Basques
St-Jean-de-Luz - Paris - Biarritz

Marzipan sweets, a specialty of southwest France


Bordeaux
Peyrehorade
Mont-de-Marsan
Boucau
BIARRITZ ②
① BAYONNE
ST-JEAN-DE-LUZ ③
Socoa
Ciboure
Espelette
Sare
④ AÏNHOA
Ustaritz
Labastide-Clairence
Hasparren
Cambo-les-Bains
Salies-de-Béarn
⑤ ORTHEZ
⑥ SAUVETERRE-DE-BÉARN
Lacq
Laàs
Saint-Palais
Navarrenx
Mourenx
Thèze
Maubourguet
Vic-en-Bigorre
Morlaas
PAU ⑩
TARBES ⑪
Nay
AQUITAINE
Nive
Gave d'Oloron
Saint-Étienne-de-Baïgorry
⑦ SAINT-JEAN-PIED-DE-PORT
Mauléon-Licharre
⑨ OLORON-STE-MARIE
Aramits
Arudy
LOURDES ⑫
Tardets-Sorholus
⑧ FORÊT D'IRATY
Argelès-Gazost
Bagnères-de-Bigorre
Orhy 2021m
Pic d'Anie 2504m
Accous
Laruns
Lescun
Pic du Midi de Bigorre 2872m
Pic du Midi d'Ossau 2884m
Cauterets
Barèges
LUZ-ST-SAUVEUR ⑭
⑬
Vignemale 3296m
Gavarnie
PARC NATIONAL DES PYRÉNÉES
N117
A64
A63
D10
D918
D933
N134
D7
N21
D921
0 kilometers 25
0 miles 25

The galleried church in the Basque village of Espelette

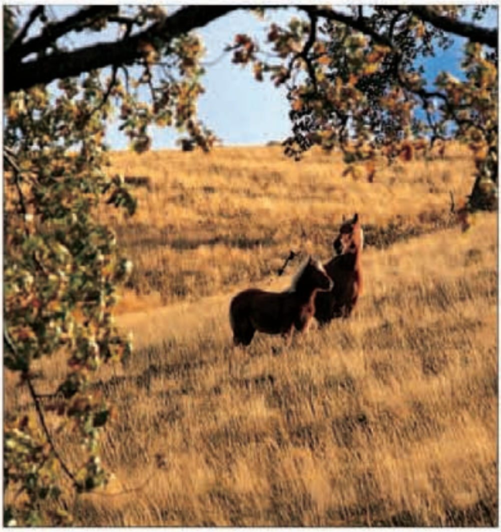
GETTING AROUND

Access to the Basque coast in the western Pyrenees is via the A63/N10 from Bordeaux. The length of the Pyrenees, including the mountain valleys, is served by the A64, which runs from Bayonne to Toulouse, via Orthez, Pau, Tarbes, and St-Gaudens. Once you are high up, expect narrow, twisting roads and slow driving. The scenic but demanding D918/D618 road crosses 18 high passes between the Atlantic and the Mediterranean.

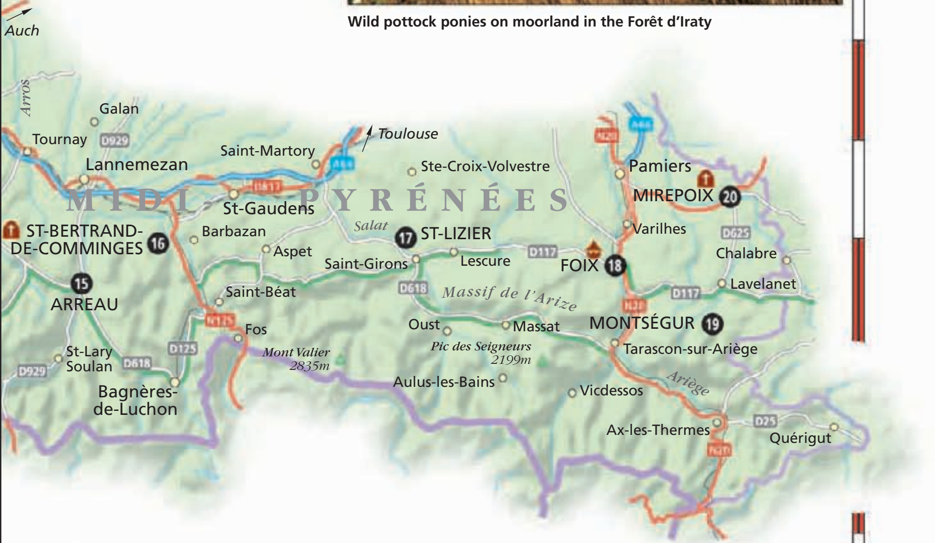
There are airports at Biarritz, Pau, and Lourdes. Both Pau and Lourdes, together with Orthez and Tarbes, are on the rail route that loops south between Bordeaux and Toulouse.

SIGHTS AT A GLANCE

Aïnhoa ❹
Arreau ⓯
Bayonne ❶
Biarritz ❷
Foix ⓲
Forêt d'Iraty ❽
Lourdes ⓬
Luz-St-Sauveur ⓮
Mirepoix ⓴
Montségur ⓳
Oloron-Ste-Marie ❾
Orthez ❺
Parc National des Pyrénées ⓭
Pau ❿
St-Bertrand-de-Comminges ⓰
St-Jean-de-Luz ❸
St-Jean-Pied-de-Port ❼
St-Lizier ⓱
Sauveterre-de-Béarn ❻
Tarbes ⓫



Wild pottock ponies on moorland in the Forêt d'Iraty


Auch
Arros
Galan
Tournay
D929
Lannemezan
Saint-Martory
Toulouse
A64
D817
Ste-Croix-Volvestre
N20
A66
Pamiers
MIDI-PYRÉNÉES
St-Gaudens
MIREPOIX ⓴
ST-BERTRAND-DE-COMMINGES ⓰
Barbazan
Salat
⓱ ST-LIZIER
Varilhes
D625
Aspet
Saint-Girons
Lescure
D117
FOIX ⓲
Chalabre
⓯ ARREAU
D618
Massif de l'Arize
Lavelanet
Saint-Béat
D117
N20
N125
Fos
Oust
Massat
MONTSÉGUR ⓳
St-Lary Soulan
D125
D618
D929
Mont Valier 2835m
Pic des Seigneurs 2199m
Tarascon-sur-Ariège
Bagnères-de-Luchon
Aulus-les-Bains
Vicdessos
Ariège
Ax-les-Thermes
D25
Quérigut
N20

St-Jean-de-Luz seen from Ciboure, across the Nivelle estuary

KEY

- — Highway
- — Major road
- — Secondary road
- — Minor road
- — Scenic route
- — Main railroad
- — Minor railroad
- — International border
- — Regional border
- ▲ Summit

Bayonne ❶

Pyrénées-Atlantiques. 👪 *45,000.*
🚆 🚌 ℹ pl des Basques *(820 42 64 64).* ⊖ *Mon–Sat (am only).*
www.bayonne-tourisme.com

Bayonne, capital of the French Basque country, lies between two rivers – the turbulent Nive which arrives straight from the mountains, and the wide, languid Adour. An important town since Roman times because of its command of one of the few easily passable roads to Spain, Bayonne prospered as a free port under English rule from 1154 to 1451. Since then it has successfully withstood 14 sieges, including a particularly bloody one directed by Wellington in 1813.

Grand Bayonne, the district around the cathedral, can be easily explored on foot. The 13th-century **Cathédrale Ste-Marie** was begun under English rule and is northern Gothic in style. Look for the handsome cloister and the 15th-century knocker on the north door – if a fugitive could put a hand to this, he was entitled to sanctuary. The pedestrianized streets around form a lively shopping area, especially the arcaded rue du Port Neuf, with cafés serving hot chocolate, a Bayonne specialty. (Fine-quality chocolate-making was introduced by the Jews who fled Spain at the end of the 15th century, and it has remained a speciality of the town.) Bayonne is also famous for its ham.

Grand Bayonne, clustered around the twin-spired cathedral

Lighthouse at Biarritz

Petit Bayonne lies on the opposite side of the quay-lined river Nive. The **Musée Basque** gives an excellent introduction to the customs and traditions of the Basque nation, with reconstructed house interiors and exhibits on seafaring. Nearby, the **Musée Bonnat** has a superb art gallery. The first floor here is a must for art lovers, with sketches by Leonardo, Van Dyck, Rubens, and Rembrandt and paintings by Goya, Corot, Ingres, and Constable.

🏛 Musée Basque
37 quai des Corsaires. ***Tel*** *05 59 59 08 98.* ○ *Tue–Sun.* ● *public hols.* 📷 ♿ 🛍 **www**.musee-basque.com

🏛 Musée Bonnat
5 rue Jacques Lafitte. ***Tel*** *05 59 59 08 52.* ○ *Wed–Mon.* ● *public hols.* 📷 ♿ **www**.musee-bonnat.com

Biarritz ❷

Pyrénées-Atlantiques. 👪 *27,400.*
✈ 🚆 🚌 ℹ *Javalquinto, square d'Ixelles (05 59 22 37 10).* ⊖ *daily.*
www.ville-biarritz.fr

Biarritz, west of Bayonne, has a grandiose center, but has been developed along the coast by residential suburbs. The resort began as a whaling port but was transformed into a playground for the European rich in the 19th century. Its popularity was assured when Empress Eugénie discovered its mild winter climate during the reign of her husband, Napoleon III. The town has three good beaches, with the best surfing in Europe, two casinos, and one of the last great luxury hotels in Europe, the Palais *(see p586)*, formerly the residence of Eugénie.

In the port des Pêcheurs, the **Musée de la Mer** aquarium is home to specimens of some of the marine life found in the Bay of Biscay. Below it, a narrow causeway leads across to the Rocher de la Vierge, offering far-reaching views along the whole of the Basque coast. The Musée du Chocolat is fine compensation for a rainy day.

🏛 Musée de la Mer
Esplanade du Rocher-de-la-Vierge, 14 plateau de l'Atalaye. ***Tel*** *05 59 22 33 44.* ○ *Apr–Oct: daily; Nov–Mar: Tue–Sun.* ● *Jan 1, 2nd–3rd week Jan, Dec 25.* 📷 ♿ 🛍 ☕
www.museedelamer.com

Altar in Eglise St-Jean-Baptiste

St-Jean-de-Luz ❸

Pyrénées-Atlantiques. 👪 *14,000.*
✈ *Biarritz.* 🚆 🚌 ℹ *20 bd Victor Hugo (05 59 26 03 16).* ⊖ *Tue & Fri.*
www.saint-jean-de-luz.com

St-Jean is a quiet fishing town out of season and a scorching tourist resort in August, with stores to rival the chic rue du Faubourg St-Honoré in Paris. In the 11th century whale carcasses were towed here to feed the whole village. The natural harbor protects the shoreline, making it one of the few beaches safe for swimming along this stretch of coast.

An important historical event took place in St-Jean: the wedding of Louis XIV and the Infanta Maria Teresa

St-Jean-de-Luz, a fishing village that explodes into life in summer

of Spain in 1660, a union that had the effect of sealing the long-awaited alliance between France and Spain, only to embroil the two countries ultimately in the War of the Spanish Succession. This wedding took place at the **Eglise St-Jean-Baptiste**, still the biggest and best of the great Basque churches, a triple-galleried marvel with a glittering 17th-century altarpiece and an atmosphere of gaiety and fervor. The gate through which the Sun King led his bride was immediately walled up by masons: a plaque now marks the place. The **Maison Louis XIV**, with its contemporary furnishings, is where the king stayed in 1660, and is worth a look.

The port is busy in the summer, while the restaurants behind the covered markets serve sizzling bowls full of *chipirons* – squid cooked in their own ink – a local speciality. Place Louis XIV is a delightful place to sit and watch the world go by.

🏛 Maison Louis XIV
Place Louis XIV. ***Tel*** *05 59 26 01 56.*
○ *Jun–Sep: daily.* ⊘ ☞

Environs
On the other side of the river Nivelle, Ciboure was the birthplace of composer Maurice Ravel. It is characterized by 18th-century merchants' houses, steep narrow streets, and seafood restaurants. A two-hour coastal walk leads to the neighboring village of **Socoa**, where the lighthouse on the clifftop offers a fine view of the coast all the way to Biarritz.

Basque men in traditional berets

Aïnhoa ④

Pyrénées-Atlantiques. 👥 *640.* 🚌
ℹ *La Mairie (05 59 29 92 60).*

A tiny township on the road to the Spanish border, Aïnhoa was founded in the 12th century as a waystation on the road to Santiago de Compostela *(see pp400–1)*. The main street of 17th-century whitewashed Basque houses and a galleried church from the same period survive.

Environs
There is a similar church in the village of Espelette nearby. Typically Basque in style, the galleries boosted the seating capacity and had the added effect of separating the men from the women and children in the main part of the church. Espelette is the trading center for *pottocks*, an ancient local breed of pony, auctioned here at the end of January. It is also the shrine of the local crop, the red pimento pepper, especially in October when a pepper festival is held here.

At the foot of the St-Ignace pass lies the pretty mountain village of **Sare**. From the pass you can reach the summit of la Rhune by cog railroad. This provides the best vantage point in the entire Pays Basque. The descent on foot is worthwhile.

11th-century château, Espelette

Sauveterre-de-Béarn and the remains of the fortified bridge over the Gave d'Oloron, the Pont de la Légende

Orthez ⑤

Pyrénées-Atlantiques. 👥 *11,000.* 🚆 🚌 ℹ *Maison Jeanne d'Albret, rue Bourg Vieux (05 59 38 32 84).* ⛱ *Tue; Nov–Mar:* foie gras *market Sat.*

Orthez is an important Béarn market town, its 13th–14th-century fortified bridge a vital river crossing point over the Gave de Pau in the Middle Ages. It has a spectacular Saturday morning market held from November to February, selling *foie gras*, smoked and air-cured Bayonne hams, and all kinds of poultry and fresh produce. Fine buildings line the rue Bourg Vieux, especially the house of Jeanne d'Albret, mother of Henry IV, on the corner of rue Roarie. Jeanne's enthusiasm for the Protestant faith alienated both her own subjects and Charles X, and ultimately caused the Béarn region to be drawn into the Wars of Religion (1562–93).

Sauveterre-de-Béarn ⑥

Pyrénées-Atlantiques. 👥 *1,400.* 🚌 ℹ *pl Royale (05 59 38 50 17).* ⛱ *Sat.*

An attractive market town, Sauveterre is well worth an overnight stay. It has breathtaking views southward over the Gave d'Oloron, the graceful single arch of the river's fortified bridge, and the 16th-century **Château de Nays**. Fishermen gather here for the annual world salmon-fishing championships, in the fast-flowing Oloron (April to July).

Be sure, also, to visit the **Château de Laàs**, 5.5 miles (9 km) along the D27 from Sauveterre, which has an excellent collection of 18th-century decorative art and furniture – notably the bed Napoleon slept in on the night after his defeat at Waterloo. There is also a pretty park with a maze.

⌂ Château de Laàs
Tel *05 59 38 91 53.* ○ *Apr–Oct: Wed–Mon (Apr: pm only; Jul–Aug: daily).* 🎫

The Château de Nays at Sauveterre in the Béarn region

St-Jean-Pied-de-Port ⑦

Pyrénées-Atlantiques. 👥 *1,700.* 🚆 🚌 ℹ *14 pl du Général de Gaulle (05 59 37 03 57).* ⛱ *Mon.*
www.pyrenees-basques.com

The old capital of Basse-Navarre lies at the foot of the Roncesvalles Pass. Here the Basques crushed the rear-guard of Charlemagne's army in 778 and killed its commander, Roland, later glorified in the *Chanson de Roland*.

Throughout the Middle Ages this red sandstone fortress-town was famous as the last rallying point before entering Spain on the pilgrim road to Santiago de Compostela *(see pp400–1)*. As soon as a group of pilgrims was spotted, the townsfolk would ring the church bells to show them the way, and the pilgrims would sing in response.

Visitors and pilgrims in all seasons still provide St-Jean with its income. They enter the narrow streets of the upper town on foot from the Porte d'Espagne, and pass cafés, hotels, and restaurants on the way up. The ramparts are worth the steep climb, as is the citadel with panoramic views.

On Mondays the town hosts a craft market, Basque *pelote* games and, in summer, shows with bulls.

Forêt d’Iraty ⑧

Pyrénées-Aquitaine. 🚌 *St-Jean-Pied-de-Port* 🚆 ℹ *St-Jean-Pied-de-Port (05 59 37 03 57), Larrau (05 59 28 62 80).*

A wild plateau of beech woods and moorland, the Forêt d’Iraty is famous for its cross-country skiing and walking. Here the ancient breed of Basque ponies, the *pottocks*, run half-wild. These creatures have not changed at all since the prehistoric inhabitants of the region traced their silhouettes on the walls of local caves.

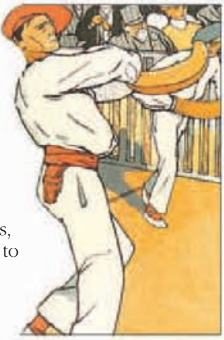
The tourist office at St-Jean-Pied-de-Port publishes maps of local walks. The best begins at the Chalet Pedro parking lot, south of the lake on the Iraty plateau, and takes you along the GR10 to 3,000-year-old standing stones on the western side of the Sommet d’Occabé.

Oloron-Ste-Marie ⑨

Pyrénées-Atlantiques. 👥 *11,400.* 🚆 🚌 ℹ *allées du Compte de Tréville (05 59 39 98 00).* 🧺 *Fri.*
www.tourisme-oloron.com

BASQUE CULTURE

Most of Basque country is in Spain, but around 10 percent lies within France. The Basque people have their own complex language, isolated from other European tongues, and their music, games, and folklore are equally distinct. French Basques are less fiercely separatist than their Spanish counterparts, but both are still deeply attached to their unique way of life.



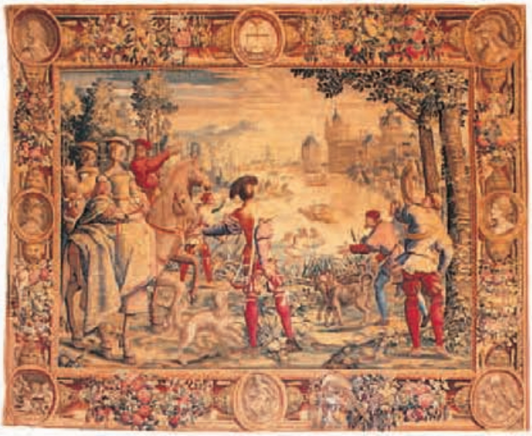
***Pelote*, the traditional Basque game**

Cathédrale Ste-Marie

Oloron, a small town at the junction of the Aspe and the Ossau valleys, has grown from a Celtiberian settlement. There are huge agricultural fairs here in May and September, and the town is famed for producing the famous classic French berets. The town’s great glory is the doorway of the Romanesque **Cathédrale Ste-Marie**, with its biblical and Pyrenean scenes. Spain lies just on the other side of the Somport pass at the head of the mountainous Aspe valley, and the influence of Spanish stonemasons is evident in Oloron’s **Eglise Sainte-Croix** with its Moorish-style vaulting.

Environs
Head up the Aspe valley to try one of the area’s famous ewe’s cheeses, or mixed cow and goat’s cheeses. A side road leads to Lescun, huddled around its church, beyond which is a spectacular range of saw-toothed peaks topped by the **Pic d’Anie** at 8,215 ft (2,504 m), one of the most beautiful spots in the Pyrenees. Sadly, at nearby Somport a controversial highway and tunnel project has posed a threat to the traditional mountain agricultural economy, and the last habitat of the Pyrenean brown bear.

High moorland above the Forêt d’Iraty, long denuded of timber for use by the French and Spanish navies



Gobelin tapestry in the Château de Pau

Pau ⑩

Pyrénées-Atlantiques. 👥 *85,700.* ✈ 🚆 🚌 ℹ *pl Royale (05 59 27 27 08).* ⌂ *Mon–Sat.* **www**.pau.fr

A lively university town, with elegant Belle Epoque architecture and shady parks, Pau is the capital of the Béarn region, and the most interesting big town in the central Pyrenees. The weather in the fall and winter is mild, so this has been a favorite resort of affluent foreigners, especially the English, since the early 19th century.

Pau is chiefly famous as the birthplace of King Henry IV. His mother, Jeanne d'Albret, traveled for 19 days by carriage from Picardy, in the eighth month of her pregnancy, just to have her baby here. She sang during her labor, convinced that if she did so, Henry would grow up as tough and resilient as she was. As soon as the infant was born, his lips were smeared with garlic and local Jurançon wine, in keeping with the traditional custom.

The town's principal sight is the **Château de Pau**, first remodeled in the 14th century for the ruler of Béarn, Gaston Phoebus *(see p463)*. It was heavily restored 400 years later. Marguerite d'Angoulême, sister of the King of France, resided here in the late 16th century, and transformed the town into a center for the arts and free thinking. The château's 16th-century Gobelin tapestries, made by Flemish weavers working in Paris, are fabulous. (The Maison Carré in Nay – 11 miles toward Lourdes – exhibits the former Musée Béarnais' important collection of artifacts retracing the history, traditions, and culture of the Béarn.)

Outside, the boulevard des Pyrénées affords glorious views of some of the highest Pyrenean peaks, which are often snowcapped year round. Continue from here to the eclectic **Musée des Beaux-Arts**, where there is a splendid Degas, the *Cotton Exchange, New Orleans*; Rubens' *Last Judgment,* and a work by El Greco.

⌂ Château de Pau
Rue du Château. ***Tel*** *05 59 82 38 02.* ○ *daily.* ● *Jan 1, May 1, Dec 25.* ☞ 📷 🛍
www.musee-chateau-pau.fr

🏛 Musée des Beaux-Arts
Rue Mathieu Lalanne ***Tel*** *05 59 27 33 02.* ○ *Wed–Mon.* ● *some public hols.* 📷 ♿ *restricted.*

Tarbes ⑪

Hautes-Pyrénées. 👥 *48,000.* ✈ 🚆 🚌 ℹ *3 cours Gambetta (05 62 51 30 31).* ⌂ *Thu.*

Tarbes is the capital of the Bigorre region, and has a major agricultural fair. The **Jardin Massey** in the middle of town was designed at the turn of the 19th century and is one of the loveliest parks in the southwest. It has many rare plants, including the North American sassafras. Its museum has a collection of 16th–20th-century European art.

The **Maison du Cheval** and the Haras National (National Stud), with its thoroughbred stallions formerly bred to supply cavalry regiments, should not be missed.

🏛 La Maison du Cheval
Chemin du Mauhourat. ***Tel*** *05 62 56 30 80.* ○ *during school hols only; phone to check times.* ● *public hols.*

Lourdes ⑫

Hautes-Pyrénées. 👥 *15,700.* ✈ 🚆 🚌 ℹ *pl Peyramale (05 62 42 77 40).* ⌂ *Mon–Sat.*
www.lourdes-infotourisme.com

Lourdes, one of the great modern shrines of Europe, owes its celebrity to visions of the Virgin experienced by 14-year-old Bernadette Soubirous in 1858. Five million people

Château de Pau, birthplace of Henry IV in 1553

◁ **St-Lizier in the foothills of the Pyrenees** annually visit **Grotte Massabielle**, the cave where the visions occurred, and the room on rue des Petits-Fossés where Bernadette's family lived, in search of miracle cures. The **Musée de Lourdes** gives information about Bernadette's life and the shrine.

Visit the **Grottes de Bétharram** for underground rides by boat and train, or the **Musée Pyrénéen**, about the pioneers who opened up these ranges.

🏛 Musée de Lourdes
Parking de l'Egalité. ***Tel*** *05 62 94 28 00.* ○ *Apr–Oct: daily.* 🎟 ♿

Grottes de Bétharram
St-Pé-de-Bigorre. ***Tel*** *05 62 41 80 04.* ○ *Feb–late Mar: Mon–Fri pms; late Mar–late Oct: daily.* 🎟 ♿

Spectacular limestone formations at the Grottes de Bétharram

Pilgrims participating in open-air mass at Lourdes

🏛 Musée Pyrénéen
Château Fort, rue du Fort.
Tel *05 62 42 37 37.* ○ *daily.* 🎟

Parc National des Pyrénées ⑬

See pp460–61.

Luz-St-Sauveur ⑭

Hautes-Pyrénées. 👥 *1,200.* 🚌 *to Lourdes.* 🚌 ℹ *pl du 8 mai (05 62 92 30 30).* ◒ *Mon am.* **www**.luz.org

Luz-St-Sauveur is an attractive spa town, with an unusual church built in the 14th century by the Hospitaliers de Saint Jean de Jérusalem (later the Knights of Malta), an order established to protect pilgrims. The church is fortified with gun slits that look out over the town and valley, and provided protection for pilgrims on the way to Santiago de Compostela.

Environs

The elegant spa town of **Cauterets** makes a good base for climbing, skiing, and walking in the rugged mountains of the Bigorre region.

Gavarnie is a former way-station on the Santiago de Compostela pilgrim route. A good track, accessible on foot or by donkey, leads from the village to the spectacular natural rock amphitheater known as the **Cirque de Gavarnie**. Here the longest waterfall in Europe, at 787 ft (240 m), cascades off the mountain into space, encircled by eleven 9,800-ft (3,000-m) peaks.

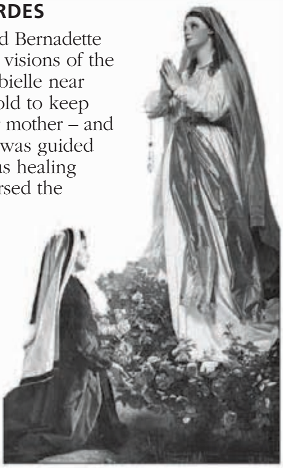
Tourists can now share much of the **Observatoire Pic du Midi de Bigorre** with scientists. Access is by cable-car from La Mongie to Le Taoulet and then up to the summit. Alternatively there are a number of walks up to the Pic (4 hours minimum).

The French are justly proud of the Observatory, which has supplied the clearest images of Venus and other planets in the solar system so far obtained from the Earth's surface. The 3.2-ft (1-m) telescope mapped out the moon for NASA's Apollo missions.

🏛 Observatoire Pic du Midi de Bigorre
Tel *08 25 00 28 77.* ○ *Feb, Mar, Jun–Aug: daily; Jan–May, Dec: Wed-Mon.* ● *Oct–Nov.* 🎟 ☕ 🍴

THE MIRACLE OF LOURDES

In 1858 a young girl named Bernadette Soubirous experienced 18 visions of the Virgin at the Grotte Massabielle near the town. Despite being told to keep away from the cave by her mother – and the local magistrate – she was guided to a spring with miraculous healing powers. The church endorsed the miracles in the 1860s, and since then, many people claim to have been cured by the holy water. A religious city of shrines, churches, and hospices has since grown up around the spring, with a dynamic tourist industry to match.

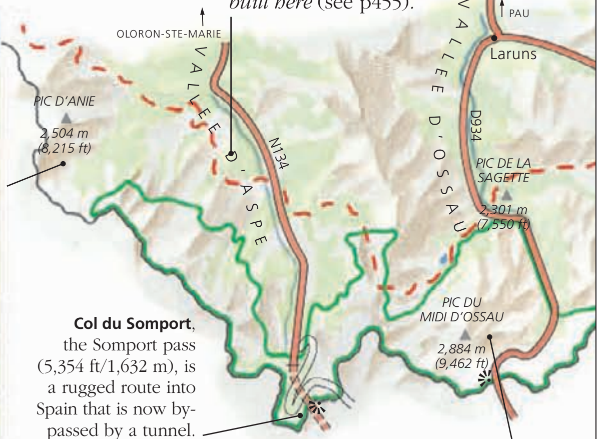

Bernadette's vision

Parc National des Pyrénées ⑬

Pyrenean ibex

The Pyrenees National Park, designated in 1967, extends 62 miles (100 km) along the French and Spanish frontier. It boasts some of the most spectacular scenery in Europe, ranging from meadows glimmering with butterflies to high peaks, snow-capped even in summer. Variations in altitude and climate make the park rich in flora and fauna. One of the most enjoyable ways to see it is on foot: within the park are 217 miles (350 km) of well-marked footpaths.

Vallée d'Aspe
Jagged peaks tower above the Vallée d'Aspe and the Cirque de Lescun. An access road to Somport Tunnel has been built here (see p455).



Col du Somport, the Somport pass (5,354 ft/1,632 m), is a rugged route into Spain that is now bypassed by a tunnel.

Pic d'Anie
The limestone-flanked 8,215-ft (2,504-m) Pic d'Anie overlooks rich upland pastures watered by melting snow. In spring, the ground is ablaze with Pyrenean varieties of gentian and columbine, found nowhere else.

Pic du Midi d'Ossau
A tough trail leads from the Bious-Artigues lake at the base of the Pic du Midi d'Ossau and encircles the formidable, tooth-shaped summit (9,462 ft/2,884 m).

PYRENEAN WILDLIFE

The Pyrenees are home to a rich variety of wild creatures, many of them unique to the range. The ibex, a member of the antelope family, is still numerous in the valleys of Ossau and Cauterets. Birds of prey include the Egyptian, griffon, and bearded vultures. Ground predators range from the rare Pyrenean lynx, to civet, pine marten, and stoat. The desman, a tiny aquatic mammal related to the mole, is found in many of the mountain streams.

Pyrenean fritillary *flowers through late spring and early summer in mountain pastures.*

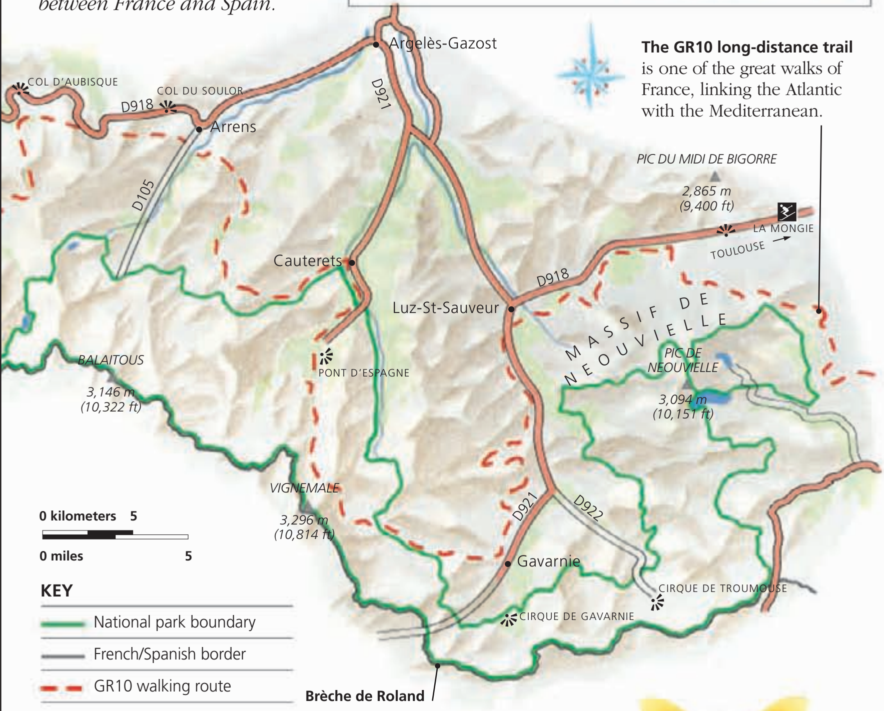
The Turk's Cap Lily *flowers June–August on rocky slopes at up to 7,218 ft (2,200 m).*

Brèche de Roland
The famous breach in the sheer crest of the Cirque de Gavarnie forms a gateway for climbers between France and Spain.

TIPS FOR WALKERS

The park is crossed by a network of numbered trails. Each is well signposted and shows the length of time needed. Mountain huts offer a meal and a bed for the night. For maps and information visit the Park Office at Cauterets (05 62 92 50 50) or at Luz-St-Sauveur (05 62 92 81 60), both open year-round, or visit www.parc-pyrenees.com.

Walking the trail in high summer


Argelès-Gazost
COL D'AUBISQUE
COL DU SOULOR
D918
Arrens
D921
D105
PIC DU MIDI DE BIGORRE
2,865 m
(9,400 ft)
LA MONGIE
TOULOUSE
Cauterets
D918
Luz-St-Sauveur
MASSIF DE NEOUVIELLE
PIC DE NEOUVIELLE
3,094 m
(10,151 ft)
BALAITOUS
3,146 m
(10,322 ft)
PONT D'ESPAGNE
VIGNEMALE
3,296 m
(10,814 ft)
D921
D922
Gavarnie
CIRQUE DE TROUMOUSE
CIRQUE DE GAVARNIE
0 kilometers 5
0 miles 5
KEY
National park boundary
French/Spanish border
GR10 walking route

The GR10 long-distance trail is one of the great walks of France, linking the Atlantic with the Mediterranean.

Brèche de Roland

The Egyptian vulture *is seen all over the Pyrenees, especially on rocky cliff faces.*

Pyrenean bears *are close to extinction but a few still live in the Ossau and Aspe valleys.*

Cleopatra

Scarce Swallowtail

These butterflies *are among several colorful species found at high altitudes.*

Arreau ⑮

Hautes-Pyrénées. 👥 *865.* 🚌
ℹ *Château des Nestes (05 62 98 63 15).* 🛒 *Thu.* **www**.vallee-aure.com

Arreau stands at the junction of the rivers Aure and Louron. A small, bustling half-timbered town with good stores and restaurants, this is the place to buy the basics for hiking or fishing in the mountains. The town surrounds a handsome town hall with a covered marketplace beneath it. Next door is a 16th-century house, the Maison de Lys, which has a façade ornamented with the fleur-de-lis motif.

Environs
St-Lary Soulan is a nearby ski resort and a good base for exploring the entire Massif du Néouvielle. Head for the village of Fabian and the smattering of lakes above it, where the GR10 *(see p461)* and other well-marked trails criss-cross the peaks. Here you may see golden eagles or an enormous lammergeier.

St-Bertrand-de-Comminges ⑯

Haute-Garonne. 👥 *300.* 🚆 *Montrejeau, then taxi.* 🚌
ℹ *Les Olivetains, parvis de la Cathédrale (05 61 95 44 44).* 🎪 *music festival (mid-Jul–end Aug).*

The pretty hilltop town of St-Bertrand is the most remarkable artistic and historic site in the Central Pyrenees and the venue for an acclaimed music festival in summer *(see p37)*. Some of the best sculpture in the region adorns the portal of the **Cathédrale Ste-Marie**. The adjoining Romanesque and Gothic cloisters contain sarcophagi, carved capitals, and statues of the four Evangelists.

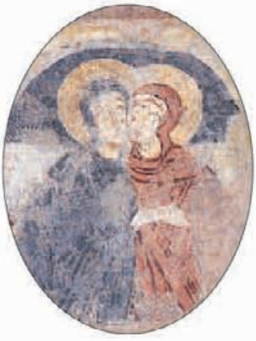
St-Bertrand's origins lie on the plain below, in the city founded by the great Roman statesman Pompey in 72 BC. At that time it consisted of two thermal baths, a theater, a temple, a market, and a Christian basilica. All were destroyed by Gontran, the grandson of Clovis *(see p212)* in 585, and six centuries were to pass before the Bishop of Comminges, Bertrand de l'Isle, saw the site as a potential location for a new cathedral and monastery. The town, which was relatively unimportant in political terms, became a major religious center.

Inside the cathedral, look out for the 66 magnificent carved choirstalls and the 16th-century organ case. The tomb of Bertrand de l'Isle is situated at the far end of the choir, with an altar beside it; the beautiful marble tomb in the Virgin's chapel just off the nave is that of Hugues de Châtillon, a bishop who provided funds for the completion of the cathedral in the 14th century.

Cloisters in the Cathédrale Ste-Marie, St-Bertrand-de-Comminges

The imposing 12th-century Cathédrale Ste-Marie in St-Bertrand

✝ Cathédrale Ste-Marie
Tel *05 61 88 33 12.* ○ *daily.*
● *Sun am* ♿ 🎟 *cloisters.*


Fresco in the Cathédrale St-Lizier

St-Lizier ⑰

Ariège. 👥 *1,500.* 🚌 ℹ *pl de l'Eglise (05 61 96 77 77).*
www.ariege.com/st-lizier

St-Lizier is located in the Ariège, a region famous for its steep-sided valleys and wild mountain scenery. The village dates back to Roman times, and by the Middle Ages was an important religious center. St-Lizier has two cathedrals; the finer is the 12th–14th-century **Cathédrale St-Lizier** in the lower town. It boasts Romanesque frescoes and a cloister with carved columns, but the **Cathédrale de la Sède** in the upper town has the better view.

St-Lizier, with snow-capped mountains in the distance

Foix ⑱

Ariège. 👥 *10,000.* 🚆 🚌 **i** *29 rue Delcassé (05 61 65 12 12).* ⛺ *Fri & 1st, 3rd & 5th Mon of each month.* **www**.ot-foix.fr

With its battlements and towers, Foix stands four-square at the junction of the rivers Arget and Ariège. In the Middle Ages, Foix's dynasty of counts ruled the whole of the Béarn area. Count Gaston Phoebus (1331–91) was the most flamboyant, a poet who wrote a famous treatise on hunting. He was a ruthless politician, who had his brother and his son put to death.

Some of the pleasures of the medieval court are re-created in the local summer fair, the largest in the southwest. At any time, the 15th-century keep of the **Château de Foix** is worth climbing just for the view. The restored 14th-century **Eglise de St-Volusien** is delightful in its simplicity and grace.

Château de Foix
Tel *05 34 09 83 83.* ○ *Wed–Mon.* ● *Jan 1, Dec 25.* ✋

Environs

The **Grotte de Niaux**, 9 miles (15 km) south of Foix, has prehistoric cave paintings. Visits are by guided tour only.

Grotte de Niaux
Tel *05 61 05 88 37.* ✋ ☝ *oblig.*

Montségur ⑲

Ariège. 👥 *100.* **i** *05 61 03 03 03.* ✋ ☝ *for the château (summer only).*

The town of Montségur is famous as the last stronghold of the Cathars *(see p491)*. From the parking lot at the foot of the mount, a path leads up to the small castle above, occupied in the 13th century by *faidits* (dispossessed aristocrats) and a Cathar community. The Cathars themselves lived outside the fortress, in houses clinging to the rock. Staunchly opposed to Catholic authority, the Cathar troops unwisely marched on Avignonnet in 1243 and massacred members of the Inquisitional tribunal. In retaliation, an army of 10,000 laid siege to Montségur for ten months. When captured, 205 Cathars refused to convert and were burned alive.

Mirepoix ⑳

Ariège. 👥 *3,300.* 🚌 **i** *pl du Maréchal Leclerc (05 61 68 83 76).* ⛺ *Mon & Thu.* **www**.tourisme-mirepoix.com

Mirepoix is a solid country bastide town *(see p445)* with a huge main square – one of the loveliest in the southwest – surrounded by beamed 13th–15th-century arcades and half-timbered houses.

The **cathedral**, begun in 1317 with the last additions made in 1867, has the widest Gothic nave (72 ft/22 m) in France.

The best times to visit the town are on market days, when stalls in the square sell a mass of local produce.

The arcaded main square at Mirepoix

THE SOUTH OF FRANCE

INTRODUCING THE SOUTH OF FRANCE 466–475

LANGUEDOC-ROUSSILLON 476–497

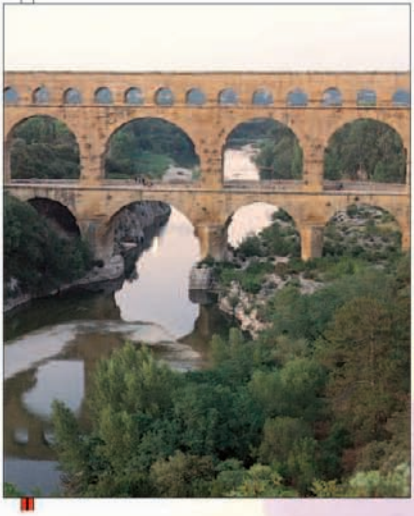
PROVENCE AND THE CÔTE D'AZUR 498–531

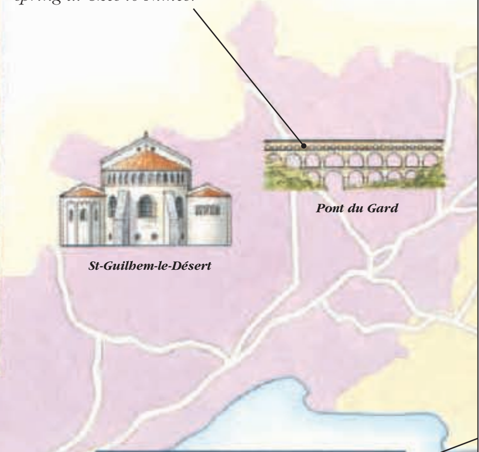
CORSICA 532–543

Introducing the South of France

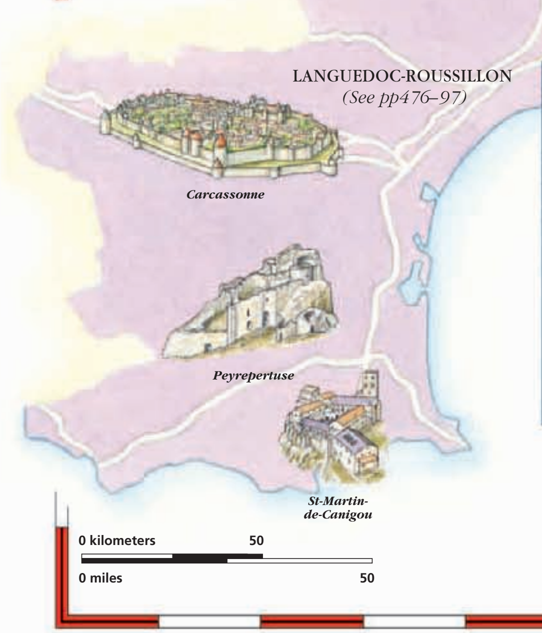
The South is France's most popular vacation region, drawing millions of visitors each year to the Riviera resorts and modern beach cities to the west. Agriculture is a mainstay of the economy, producing early fruits and an abundance of affordable wine. The new hi-tech industries of Nice and Montpellier reflect the region's key role in the developing south coast sunbelt, while Corsica still preserves much of its natural beauty. The map shows the major sights of this sun-blessed region.

Pont du Gard, *a 2,000-year-old bridge* (see p495), *is a major feat of Roman engineering. It was a key link in the 10.5-mile (17-km) aqueduct, parts of which were underground, carrying fresh water from a spring at Uzes to Nîmes.*



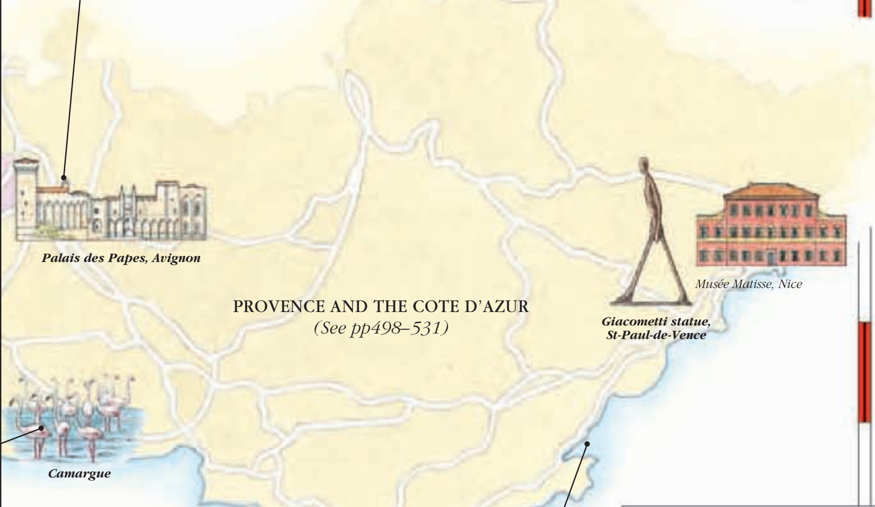

St-Guilhem-le-Désert
Pont du Gard

The Camargue *lies at the mouth of the Rhône delta, where marshland and inland seas support a rich selection of wildlife. Three visitors' centers give a good introduction to this fragile area and its population of pink flamingoes and white horses* (see pp510–11).

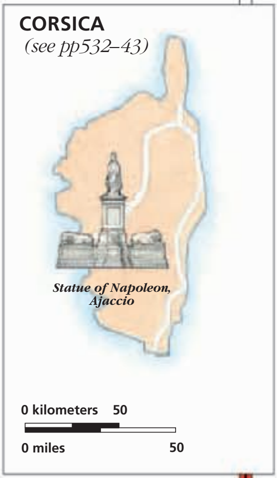

LANGUEDOC-ROUSSILLON
(See pp476–97)
Carcassonne
Peyrepertuse
St-Martin-de-Canigou
0 kilometers 50
0 miles 50

For additional map symbols *see back flap*

Avignon, *enclosed by massive ramparts, became papal territory when popes decamped from Rome* (see p503) *in the 14th century, taking up residence in the Palais des Papes which towers over the town. In the summer the town is the scene of the popular Avignon Festival.*


Palais des Papes, Avignon
PROVENCE AND THE COTE D'AZUR
(See pp498–531)
Musée Matisse, Nice
Giacometti statue, St-Paul-de-Vence
Camargue

The Côte d'Azur *has attracted sunworshippers and celebrities since the 1920s* (see pp474–5). *The coast also offers some prize collections of 20th-century art* (pp472–3) *and yearly events such as the Cannes Film Festival and Antibes Jazz Festival.*


CORSICA
(see pp532–43)
Statue of Napoleon, Ajaccio
0 kilometers 50
0 miles 50

The Flavors of the South of France

Mediterranean France has a fresh, sunny cuisine, with ripe and flavorful fruit and vegetables, fresh fish and seafood, and lean meat from mountain pastures. Good dishes are enhanced by key ingredients: olive oil, garlic, and aromatic herbs. Markets are a colorful feast of seasonal produce all year round. Whether you opt for a picnic choice of local hams, sausage, bread, and cheese to eat on the beach, share a simple lunch of tomato salad and grilled fish or lamb in a village bistro, or indulge in the sophisticated cuisine of one of France's top chefs, you can be sure of food that is not only authentic and delicious, but healthy, too.

Local olives and olive oil

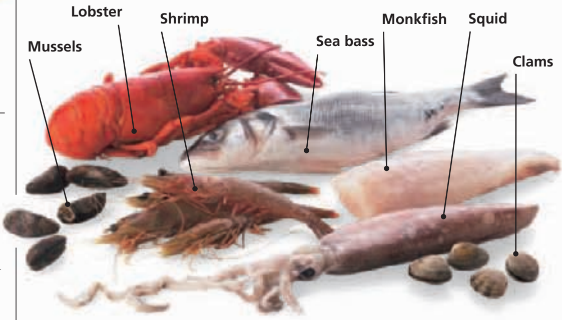
Preserving anchovies in seasoned olive oil in Languedoc-Roussillon

LANGUEDOC-ROUSSILLON

There is a robust Catalan flavor to the food of this region bordering Spain. Spices and almonds add an exotic touch to the fruit and vegetables produced in abundance on the Roussillon plain, and the grass-fed beef and lamb of the Mediterranean Pyrenees. Fish is plentiful: Sète is the largest fishing port on the French Mediterranean, huge oyster and mussel beds thrive in the saltwater lagoons of the coast, and the little fishing port of Collioure is famous for its anchovies. Local dishes include *brandade de morue*, a specialty of Nîmes, squid stuffed with anchovies, and snails with garlic and ham. Roussillon is famous for its peaches and apricots, and the cherries of Ceret are always the first to be harvested in France. Goat's milk is the main source of cheese, with round, orange-rinded Pélardon the most common.

PROVENCE

This is the land of the olive and of rich green olive oil. These are evident in a wide range of dishes, such as *aioli*, a rich mayonnaise of olive oil and garlic, served with vegetables or fish;



Selection of Mediterranean seafood available in the south of France

REGIONAL DISHES AND SPECIALTIES

Fresh figs

The *cuisine du soleil*, "cuisine of the sun," has produced several classic dishes. *Bouillabaisse* is the most famous. The ingredients of this fish stew vary from place to place, though Marseille claims the original recipe. A variety of local seafood (always including *rascasse*, or scorpion fish) is cooked in stock with tomatoes and saffron. The fish liquor is traditionally served first, with croûtons spread with *rouille*, a spicy mayonnaise, and the fish served afterward. Once a fishermen's meal, it is now a luxury item you may need to order 24 hours in advance. A simpler version is *bourride*, a garlicky fish soup. Rich red wine stews, known as *daubes*, are another specialty, usually made with beef, but sometimes tuna or calamari. Other classics include *ratatouille* and *salade niçoise*.

Artichauts à la barigoule
Small violet artichokes are stuffed with bacon and vegetables, cooked in wine.

Dried spices and herbs on sale at the market in Nice

tapenade, a purée of olives, anchovies, and capers; and *pissaladière*, a type of pizza made with onions, olives, and anchovies, with a distinct Italian accent. Vegetables play a leading role: courgettes (zucchini) or tomatoes stuffed in the Niçois style with meat, rice, and herbs; baby artichokes sautéed with bacon; or aromatic *pistou*, a bean and vegetable soup laced with a sauce of basil and garlic. Mediterranean fish is highly prized, and is often best appreciated simply grilled. Meat includes game and rabbit, Sisteron lamb, grazed on high mountain pastures, and the bull's meat stew of the Camargue, served with nutty local red rice. There is also ripe fruit aplenty, from juicy figs to fragrant Cavaillon melons to the vivid lemons of Menton.

CORSICA

The cuisine of Corsica is a robust version of the Mediterranean diet. Chestnuts were once the staple food of the island, and the flour is still widely used. There is a huge variety of *charcuterie*, including flavorful hams and sausages, smoked, cured, or air-dried in the traditional way. Wild boar is a delicacy, stewed with chestnuts in red wine. Roast goat *(cabri roti)* is served as a festive meal, spiked with garlic and rosemary. Game, from rabbit to pigeon and partridge, is also very popular. On the coast there is locally caught fish and seafood, including monkfish, squid, sea urchins, and sardines, the latter most delicious stuffed with herbs and Brocciu, a ricotta-style soft cheese. Local honey is redolent of mountain herbs, and jams are made from a huge variety of ingredients.

Ripe chestnuts on the tree in a Corsican forest

ON THE MENU

Beignets des fleurs de courgette Courgette (zucchini) flower fritters.

Estoficada Salt cod stewed with tomatoes, potatoes, garlic, and olives.

Fougasse Flat olive oil bread often studded with olives.

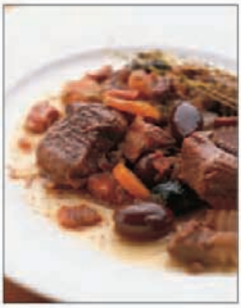
Ratatouille Stew of aubergine (eggplant), tomatoes, courgettes (zucchini), and peppers.

Salade Niçoise Lettuce with hard-boiled egg, olives, green beans, tomatoes, and anchovies.

Socca Chickpea (garbanzo) pancakes, a specialty of Nice.

Tourte des blettes Pie of chard, raisins, and pine nuts.

Brandade de morue *Dried salted cod is cooked in water, then beaten with olive oil and milk to make a purée.*


Bœuf en daube *Beef is marinated in red wine, onions, and garlic, then stewed with orange peel and tomato.*

Crème catalane *Originating in Spain, this dessert is an egg custard topped with a flambéed sugar crust.*

France's Wine Regions: the South

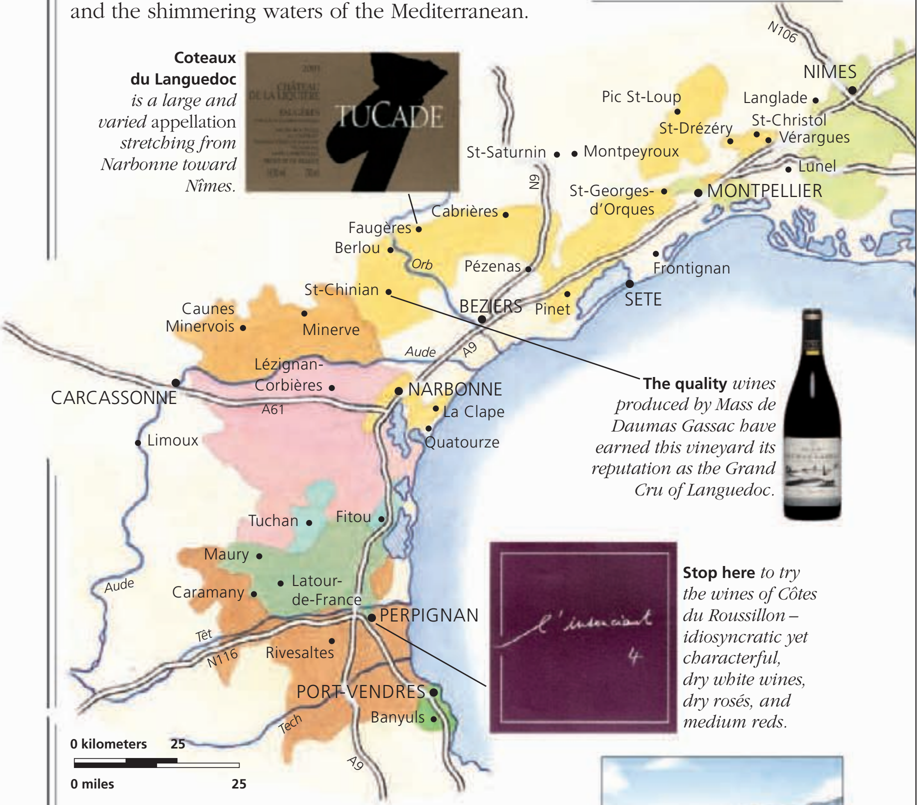
Cellier des Dominicains
DEGUSTATION VENTE

Cellar sign, Banyuls

A massive arc stretching from Banyuls, in the extreme southern corner of France, to Nice, close to the Italian border, encompasses the Mediterranean vineyards of Languedoc-Roussillon and Provence. This was for a century an area of mass-produced wine, and much is still of *vin de table* quality. Today, however, the more dynamic producers are applying new technology to traditional and classic grape varieties to revive southern France's nobler heritage of generous, warm, aromatic wines, redolent of sunbaked stone, the scent of wild herbs, and the shimmering waters of the Mediterranean.

LOCATOR MAP

▨ *Languedoc-Roussillon & Provence*


TUCADE
FAUGÈRES
N106
NIMES
Pic St-Loup
Langlade
St-Drézéry
St-Christol
Vérargues
St-Saturnin
Montpeyroux
Lunel
N9
St-Georges-d'Orques
MONTPELLIER
Cabrières
Faugères
Berlou
Orb
Pézenas
Frontignan
St-Chinian
BEZIERS
Pinet
SETE
Caunes Minervois
Minerve
Aude
A9
Lézignan-Corbières
NARBONNE
CARCASSONNE
A61
La Clape
Quatourze
Limoux
Tuchan
Fitou
Maury
Aude
Caramany
Latour-de-France
PERPIGNAN
l'intendant 4
Têt
N116
Rivesaltes
PORT-VENDRES
Banyuls
Tech
A9
0 kilometers 25
0 miles 25

Coteaux du Languedoc *is a large and varied* appellation *stretching from Narbonne toward Nîmes.*

The quality *wines produced by Mass de Daumas Gassac have earned this vineyard its reputation as the Grand Cru of Languedoc.*

Stop here *to try the wines of Côtes du Roussillon – idiosyncratic yet characterful, dry white wines, dry rosés, and medium reds.*

KEY

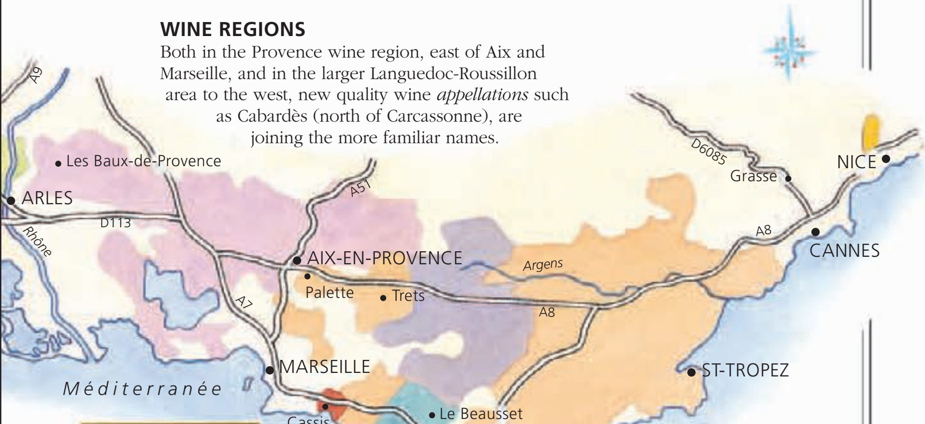
🟩 Collioure & Banyuls	🟩 Costières du Gard
🟧 Côtes de Roussillon	▨ Coteaux d'Aix en Provence
🟩 Côtes de Roussillon Villages	🟧 Côtes de Provence
🟦 Fitou	🟥 Cassis
▨ Corbières	🟦 Bandol & Côtes de Provence
🟧 Minervois	⬜ Coteaux Varois
🟨 Coteaux du Languedoc	🟨 Bellet

Rugged valley slopes in Corbières

Hand-picking grapes for Côtes de Provence red wine

WINE REGIONS

Both in the Provence wine region, east of Aix and Marseille, and in the larger Languedoc-Roussillon area to the west, new quality wine *appellations* such as Cabardès (north of Carcassonne), are joining the more familiar names.


A9
Les Baux-de-Provence
ARLES
D113
Rhône
A51
AIX-EN-PROVENCE
Palette
Trets
A7
Argens
A8
D6085
Grasse
NICE
A8
CANNES
MARSEILLE
Méditerranée
ST-TROPEZ
Cassis
Le Beausset
Bandol
TOULON
HYERES
Le Lavandou

Domaine Tempier
BANDOL
2005

Bandol *is a small* appellation *that uses a traditional southern French red grape, the* Mourvèdre, *to produce its quality reds.*

La Courtade *reds, whites, and rosés are produced by the Domaine de la Courtade, one of three vineyards located on the Ile de Porquerolles off the coast of Provence.*

KEY FACTS ABOUT WINES OF THE SOUTH

Location and Climate

A warm and sunny climate helps to create generously alcoholic wines. The flat coastal plains support acres of vines, but generally the best sites are on the schist and limestone hillsides.

Grape Varieties

Mass-production grapes such as ***Aramon*** are giving way to quality varieties such as ***Syrah***, ***Mourvèdre***, and ***Grenache***. ***Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot***, and ***Syrah***, and the whites ***Chardonnay, Sauvignon Blanc***, and ***Viognier***, are increasingly used for *vins de pays*. Rich, sweet whites are made from the aromatic, honeyed ***Muscat*** grape.

Good Producers

Corbières & Minervois: La Voulte Gasparets, Saint Auriol, Lastours, Villerambert-Julien. *Faugères*: Château des Estanilles, Châeau de la Liquiere. *St Chinian*: Château Cazal-Viel, Domaine Navarre, Cave de Roquebrun. *Coteaux du Languedoc and vins de pays*: Mas Jullien, Château de Capitoul, Domaine de la Garance, Mas de Daumas Gassac, Pech-Celeyran. *Roussillon*: Domaine Gauby, Domaine Sarda Malet. *Provence:* Domaine Tempier, Château Pibarnon, Domaine de Trévallon, Mas de la Dame, Domaine Richeaume, La Courtade, Château Simone, Château Pradeaux, Château de Bellet.

Artists and Writers in the South of France

Monet's palette

Artists and writers have helped create our image of the South of France – the poet Stephen Liégeard even gave the Côte d'Azur its name in 1887. Many writers, French and foreign, found a haven in the warmth of the south. From Cézanne to Van Gogh, Monet to Picasso, artists have been inspired by the special light and brilliant colors of this seductive region. Today it is rich in art museums, some devoted to single artists like Matisse, Picasso, and Chagall, others with varied collections such as those in Céret, Nîmes, Montpellier, St-Tropez, St-Paul-de-Vence, and Nice *(see pp482–527)*.

Picasso and Françoise Gilot on the Golfe Juan, 1948

Paul Cézanne's studio in Aix-en-Provence *(see p511)*

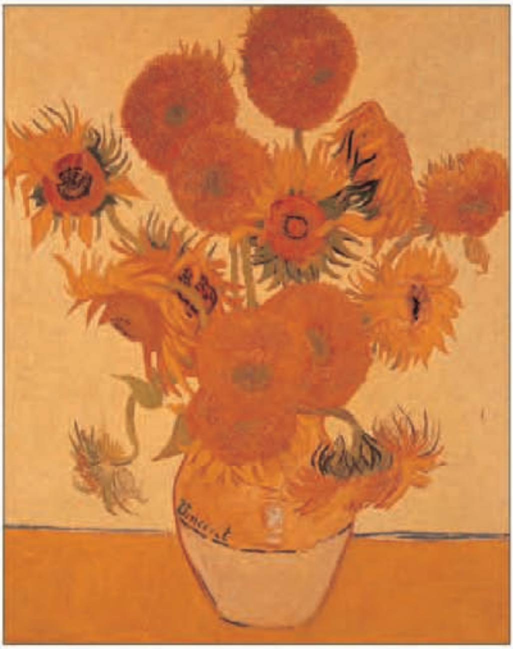
FESTIVE LIGHT

The Impressionists were fascinated by the effects of light, and Monet was entranced by "the glaring festive light" of the south which made colors so intense he said no one would believe they were real if painted accurately. In 1883 Renoir came with him to the south, returning often to paint his voluptuous nudes in the filtered golden light. Bonnard, too, settled here, painting endless views of the red tiled roofs and palm trees.

Post-Impressionists Van Gogh and Gauguin arrived in 1888, attracted by the region's rich colors. Cézanne, who was born in Aix in 1839, analyzed and painted the structure of nature, above all the landscape of Provence and his beloved Mont-Ste-Victoire. Pointillist Paul Signac came to St-Tropez to paint sea and sky in a rainbow palette of dots.

THE WILD BEASTS

The Fauves, dubbed "Wild Beasts" for their unnaturally bright and wild colors, led one of the first 20th-century avant-garde movements, founded by Matisse in Collioure in 1905 *(see p29)*. Other Fauves included Derain, Vlaminck, Marquet, Van Dongen, and Dufy. Matisse visited Corsica in 1898, and then St-Tropez, and was inspired by the sensuality of Provence to paint the celebrated *Luxe, Calme, et Volupté*. Eventually he settled in Nice, where he painted his great series of Odalisques. He wrote, "What made me stay are the great colored reflections of January, the luminosity of daylight." The exquisite blue-and-white chapel he designed in Vence is one of the most moving of his later works *(see p523)*.

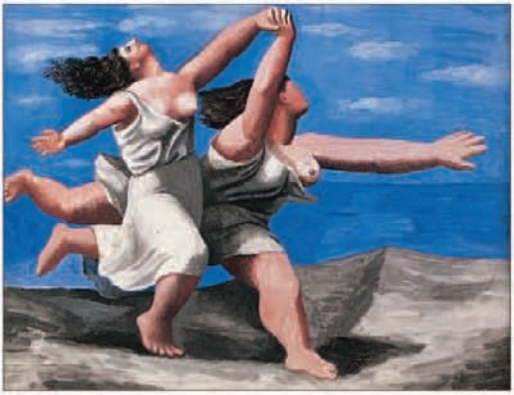


Vincent Van Gogh's *Sunflowers* (1888)

PICASSO COUNTRY

The South of France is, without question, Picasso country. His nymphs and sea urchins, his monumental women running on the beach, his shapes and colors, ceramics and sculpture are all derived from the hard shadows and bright colors of the south.

Pablo Picasso was born in Malaga in Spain in 1881, but he spent much of his life on the French Mediterranean, developing Cubism with Braque in Céret in 1911, and arriving in Juan-les-Pins in 1920. He was in Antibes when war broke out in 1939, where he painted *Night Fishing at Antibes*, a luminous nocturnal seascape. He returned in 1946 and was given the Grimaldi Palace to use as a studio. It is now a Picasso Museum *(see p521)*. He also worked in Vallauris, producing ceramics and sculptures *(see p522)*.


Deux Femmes Courant sur la Plage **(1933) by Pablo Picasso**

LOST CAVIAR DAYS

Just as F. Scott Fitzgerald wrote the Jazz Age into existence, he created the glittering image of life on the Riviera with *Tender is the Night*. He and Zelda arrived in 1924 attracted, like many expatriate writers, by the warm climate and the cheap, easy living. "One could get away with more on the summer Riviera, and whatever happened seemed to have something to do with art," he wrote. They passed their villa on to another American, Ernest Hemingway. Many other writers flocked there including Katherine Mansfield, D.H. Lawrence, Aldous Huxley, Friedrich Nietzsche, Lawrence Durrell, and Graham Greene. Some, like Somerset Maugham, led a glamorous lifestyle surrounded by exotic guests. Colette was an early visitor to St-Tropez, and in 1954, Françoise Sagan captured the youthful hedonism of the time in her novel, *Bonjour Tristesse*.

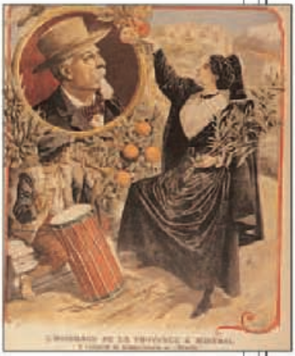
F. Scott and Zelda Fitzgerald with daughter

NEW REALISM

In the 1950s Nice produced its own school of artists, the *Nouveaux Réalistes*, including Yves Klein, Arman, Martial Raysse, Tinguely, César, Niki de Saint Phalle, and Daniel Spoerri *(see pp526–7)*. They explored the possibilities of everyday objects – Arman sliced violins, packaged and displayed trash; Tinguely exploded TV sets and cars. They had a light-hearted approach, "We live in a land of vacations, which gives us the spirit of nonsense," said Klein. He painted solid blue canvases of his personal color, International Klein Blue, taking the inspiration of the Mediterranean to its limit.

PROVENÇAL WRITERS

The regions of Provence and Languedoc have always had a distinct literary identity, ever since the troubadours in the 12th–13th centuries composed their love poetry in the *langue d'oc* Provençal, a Latin-based language. In the last century, many regional writers have been inspired by the landscape and local traditions. They were influenced by the 19th-century Felibrige movement to revive the language, led by Nobel prize-winning poet Frédéric Mistral. Some, like Daudet and film-maker turned writer Marcel Pagnol, celebrate the Provençal character; others, such as Jean Giono, explore the connection between nature and humanity.


Frédéric Mistral in the *Petit Journal*

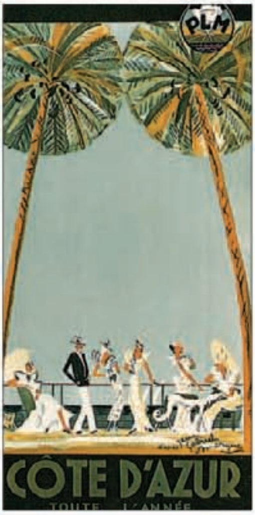
Beaches in the South of France

CARLTON
HOTEL
CANNES

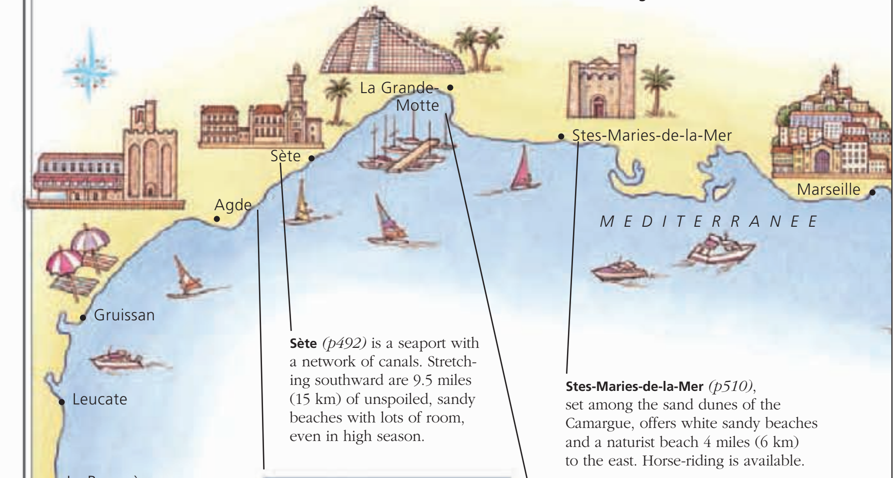
The Carlton Hotel logo

The glamorous Mediterranean coast is France's foremost vacation playground. To the east lie the Riviera's big, traditional resorts such as Menton, Nice, Cannes, and Monte-Carlo. To the west are smaller resorts in coves and bays like St-Tropez and Cassis. Farther on is the Camargue reserve at the mouth of the Rhône. West of the Rhône, making a majestic curve reaching almost to the Spanish border, is the long, sandy shore of Languedoc-Roussillon, where a string of purpose-built resorts range from modernistic beach cities to replicas of fishing villages.

The beaches are sandy west of Antibes; eastward, they are naturally shingly, so any sand is imported. Anti-pollution drives mean that most beaches are now clean, except in a few spots west of Marseille and around Nice. Beaches around towns often charge fees but are usually well equipped.


PLM
CÔTE D'AZUR
TOUTE L'ANNÉE

A rail poster by Domergue advertising the Côte d'Azur

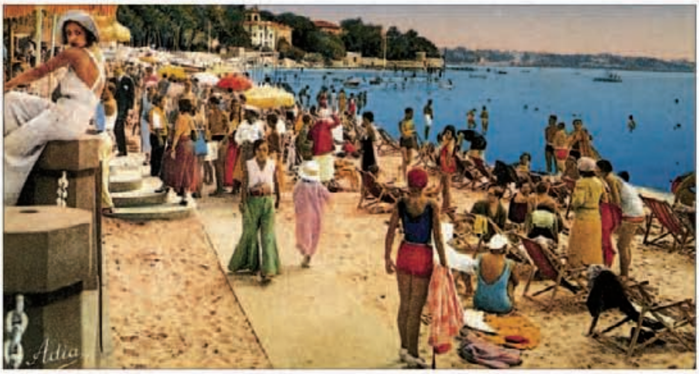

La Grande-Motte
Stes-Maries-de-la-Mer
Sète
Agde
Marseille
MEDITERRANEE
Gruissan
Leucate
Le Barcarès
Argelès Plage
Collioure
0 kilometers 25
0 miles 25

Sète *(p492)* is a seaport with a network of canals. Stretching southward are 9.5 miles (15 km) of unspoiled, sandy beaches with lots of room, even in high season.

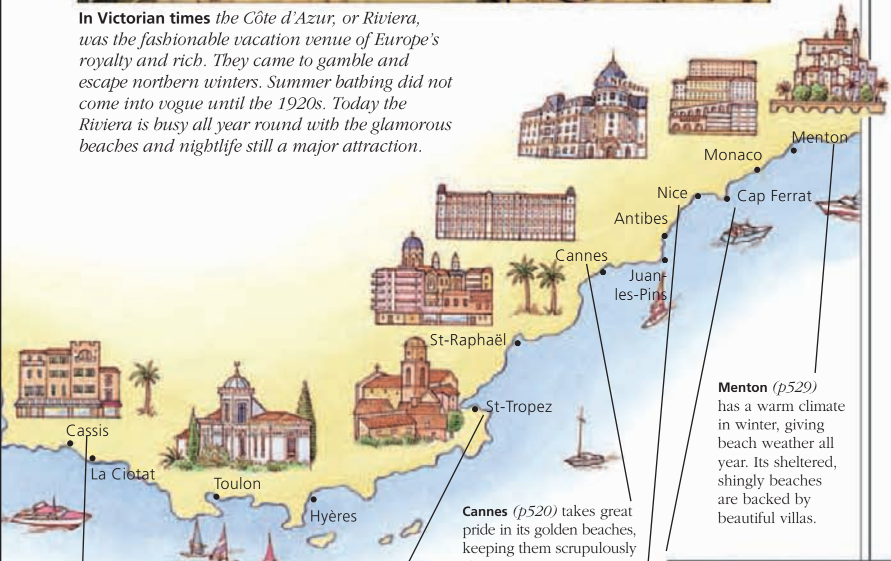
Stes-Maries-de-la-Mer *(p510)*, set among the sand dunes of the Camargue, offers white sandy beaches and a naturist beach 4 miles (6 km) to the east. Horse-riding is available.

Cap d'Agde (p487) *is a vast modern resort with long, golden sandy beaches and sports facilities of all kinds. It has Europe's largest naturist resort, accommodating 20,000 visitors.*

La Grande-Motte (p495) *is a huge purpose-built beach resort with excellent sports facilities, famous for its bizarre ziggurat architecture.*



In Victorian times *the Côte d'Azur, or Riviera, was the fashionable vacation venue of Europe's royalty and rich. They came to gamble and escape northern winters. Summer bathing did not come into vogue until the 1920s. Today the Riviera is busy all year round with the glamorous beaches and nightlife still a major attraction.*



Menton *(p529)* has a warm climate in winter, giving beach weather all year. Its sheltered, shingly beaches are backed by beautiful villas.

Cannes *(p520)* takes great pride in its golden beaches, keeping them scrupulously clean: most are private with entrance fees.

Cassis *(p513)* is a charming fishing village with a popular casino, white cliffs, and some lovely hidden creeks nearby.

St-Tropez (p516) *is flanked by golden beaches mostly occupied by stylish "clubs" offering amenities at a price.*

Nice (p526), *has a visually dramatic waterfront with a wide, handsome promenade, but the beach itself is stony and has a busy highway alongside.*

Cap Ferrat (p528) *is a wooded peninsula which has a 6-mile (10-km) craggy cliff walk offering glimpses of grand villas and private beaches.*

LANGUEDOC-ROUSSILLON

AUDE · GARD · HÉRAULT · PYRÉNÉES-ORIENTALES

The two distinct provinces of Languedoc and Roussillon stretch from the foothills of the Pyrenees on the Spanish border to the mouth of the Rhône. The flat beaches and lagoons of the coast form a purpose-built sunbelt accommodating millions of vacationers every year. In between is a dry, sunburned land producing half of France's table wine and the season's first peaches and cherries.

Beyond such sensuous pleasures are many layers of history, not least the unification of the two provinces. The formerly independent Languedoc once spoke Occitan, the tongue of the troubadours, and still cherishes its separate identity. Roussillon was a Spanish possession until the treaty of the Pyrenees in 1659. Its Catalan heritage is displayed everywhere from the road signs to the Sardana dance, and the flavor of Spain is evident in the popularity of bullfights, paella, and gaudily painted façades.

This stretch of coastline was the first place in Gaul to be settled by the Romans, their enduring legacy evident in the great amphitheater at Nîmes and the magnificent engineering of the Pont du Gard. The abbeys of St-Martin-du-Canigou, St-Michel-de-Cuxa, and St-Guilhem-le-Désert are superb examples of early Romanesque architecture, unaffected by Northern Gothic. The great craggy Cathar castles and the perfectly restored medieval Cité of Carcassonne bear witness to the bloody battles of the Middle Ages.

In parts, the region remains wild and untamed: from the high plateaus of the Cerdagne, to the wild hills of the Corbières or the remote uplands of Haut Languedoc. But it also has the most youthful and progressive cities in France: Montpellier, the ancient university city and capital of the region, and Nîmes with its exuberant *feria* and bullfights. The whole area is typified by an insouciant mixture of ancient and modern, from Roman temples and postmodern architecture in its cities to solar power and ancient abbeys in the mountains.

A sunny stretch of coastline at Cap d'Agde

◁ **The abbey of Saint-Martin-du-Canigou perched on Mount Canigou**

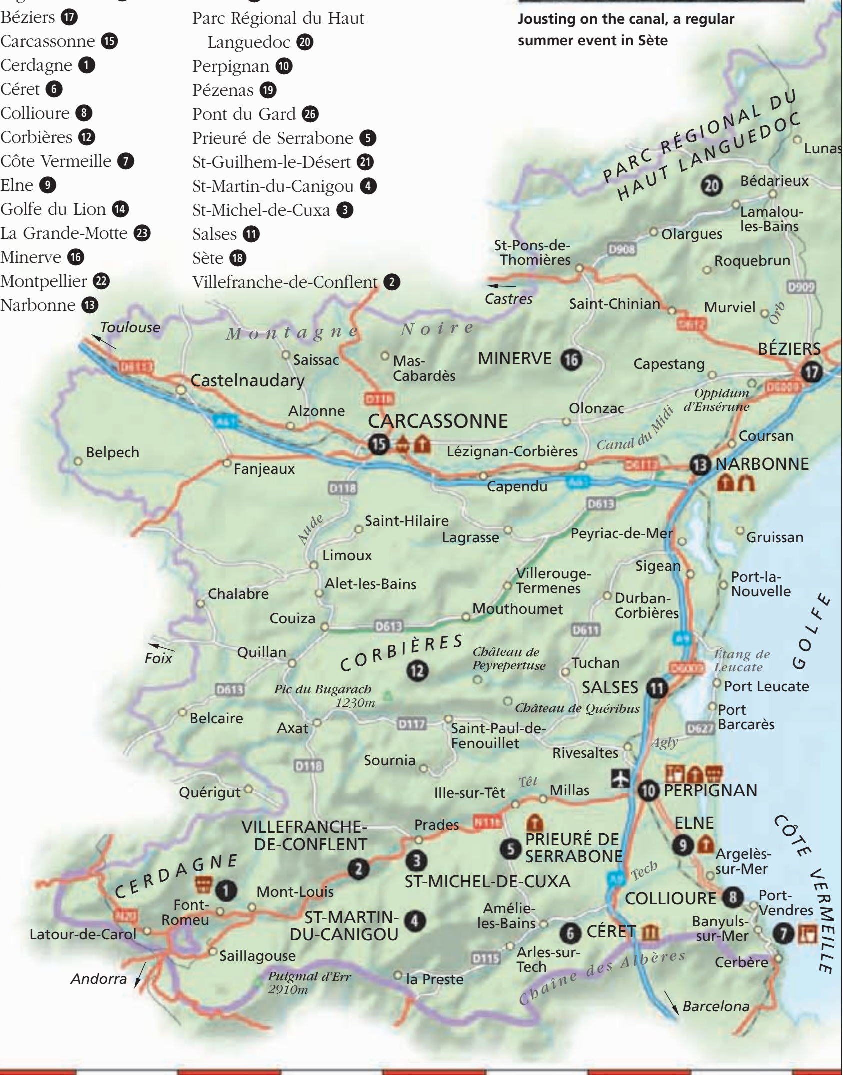
Exploring Languedoc-Roussillon

Languedoc-Roussillon combines miles of gentle coastline with a rugged hinterland. Its clean, sandy beaches are perfect for family vacations, with resorts ranging from traditional fishing villages to new purpose-built resorts. Inland is quieter, with acres of vineyards in the Corbières and Minervois and mountain walks in the Haut Languedoc and Cerdagne. A rich architectural heritage ranges from Roman to Romanesque, contrasting with the modern, vibrant atmosphere of the main cities.

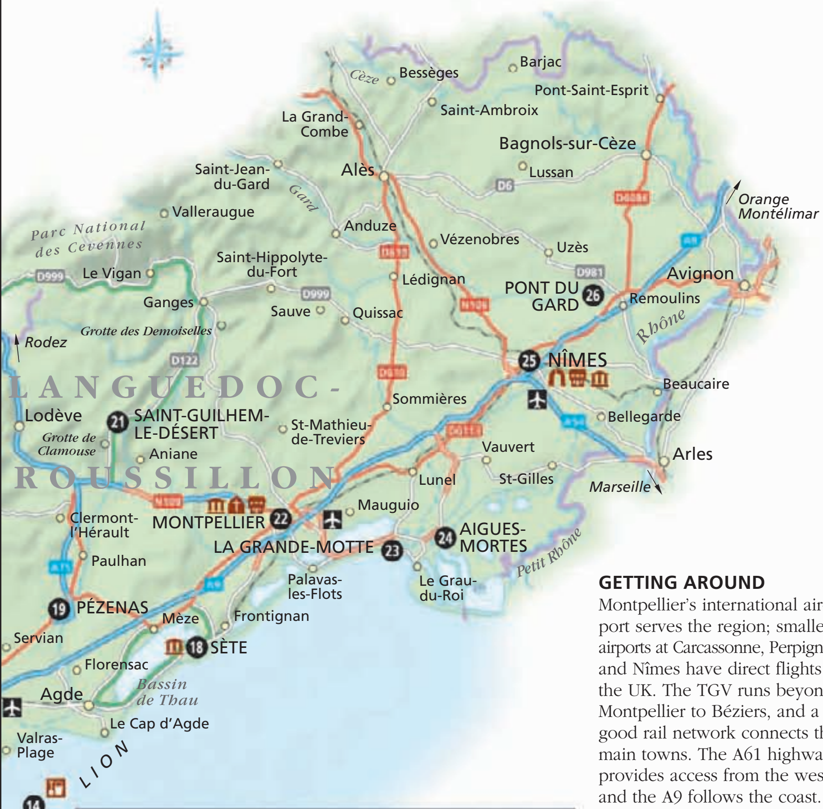
Jousting on the canal, a regular summer event in Sète

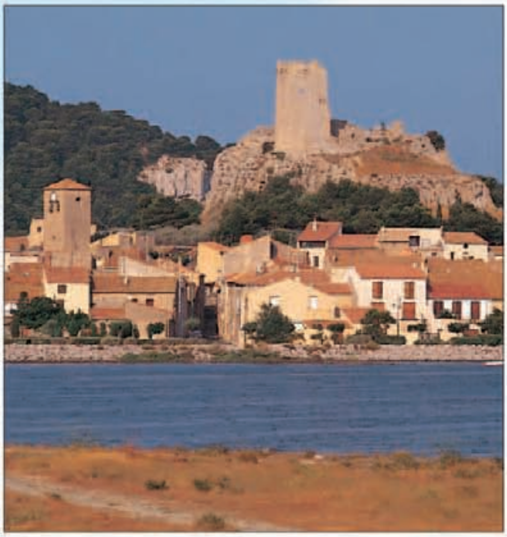
SIGHTS AT A GLANCE

- Aigues-Mortes ㉔
- Béziers ⑰
- Carcassonne ⑮
- Cerdagne ①
- Céret ⑥
- Collioure ⑧
- Corbières ⑫
- Côte Vermeille ⑦
- Elne ⑨
- Golfe du Lion ⑭
- La Grande-Motte ㉓
- Minerve ⑯
- Montpellier ㉒
- Narbonne ⑬
- Nîmes ㉕
- Parc Régional du Haut Languedoc ⑳
- Perpignan ⑩
- Pézenas ⑲
- Pont du Gard ㉖
- Prieuré de Serrabone ⑤
- St-Guilhem-le-Désert ㉑
- St-Martin-du-Canigou ④
- St-Michel-de-Cuxa ③
- Salses ⑪
- Sète ⑱
- Villefranche-de-Conflent ②


PARC RÉGIONAL DU HAUT LANGUEDOC
Lunas
⑳ Bédarieux
Lamalou-les-Bains
Olargues
St-Pons-de-Thomières
D908
Roquebrun
D909
Castres
Saint-Chinian
Murviel
Orb
Toulouse
Montagne Noire
Saissac
Mas-Cabardès
MINERVE ⑯
Capestang
BÉZIERS ⑰
Castelnaudary
Alzonne
Oppidum d'Ensérune
A61
CARCASSONNE ⑮
Olonzac
Canal du Midi
Coursan
Belpech
Lézignan-Corbières
⑬ NARBONNE
Fanjeaux
Capendu
D118
D613
Aude
Saint-Hilaire
Lagrasse
Peyriac-de-Mer
Gruissan
Limoux
Sigean
Alet-les-Bains
Villerouge-Termenes
Port-la-Nouvelle
Chalabre
Durban-Corbières
Couiza
D613
Mouthoumet
GOLFE
D611
Foix
Quillan
CORBIÈRES ⑫
Château de Peyrepertuse
Tuchan
Étang de Leucate
D613
Pic du Bugarach 1230m
SALSES ⑪
Port Leucate
Château de Quéribus
Port Barcarès
Belcaire
Axat
D117
Saint-Paul-de-Fenouillet
D627
Agly
Rivesaltes
Sournia
D118
Têt
Quérigut
Ille-sur-Têt
Millas
⑩ PERPIGNAN
VILLEFRANCHE-DE-CONFLENT ②
Prades
ELNE ⑨
CÔTE VERMEILLE
③
⑤ PRIEURÉ DE SERRABONE
Argelès-sur-Mer
CERDAGNE ①
ST-MICHEL-DE-CUXA
Tech
Mont-Louis
A9
COLLIOURE ⑧
Port-Vendres
Font-Romeu
ST-MARTIN-DU-CANIGOU ④
Amélie-les-Bains
N20
Latour-de-Carol
⑥ CÉRET
Banyuls-sur-Mer ⑦
Saillagouse
Arles-sur-Tech
D115
Cerbère
Andorra
Puigmal d'Err 2910m
la Preste
Chaîne des Albères
Barcelona

For additional map symbols *see back flap*


Cèze
Bessèges
Barjac
Pont-Saint-Esprit
Saint-Ambroix
La Grand-Combe
Bagnols-sur-Cèze
Saint-Jean-du-Gard
Alès
Lussan
D6
D6086
Orange
Montélimar
Gard
Valleraugue
Anduze
Parc National des Cevennes
Vézenobres
Uzès
A9
D999
Le Vigan
Saint-Hippolyte-du-Fort
D6110
Lédignan
D981
Avignon
PONT DU GARD 26
Remoulins
Ganges
Sauve
D999
Quissac
N106
Rhône
Grotte des Demoiselles
Rodez
D122
D610
25 NÎMES
LANGUEDOC-ROUSSILLON
Beaucaire
Sommières
Lodève
21 SAINT-GUILHEM-LE-DÉSERT
St-Mathieu-de-Treviers
Bellegarde
A54
Grotte de Clamouse
Aniane
D6113
Vauvert
Arles
Lunel
St-Gilles
Marseille
N109
Clermont-l'Hérault
MONTPELLIER 22
Mauguio
24 AIGUES-MORTES
Paulhan
LA GRANDE-MOTTE 23
A75
Palavas-les-Flots
Le Grau-du-Roi
Petit Rhône
A9
19 PÉZENAS
Mèze
Frontignan
Servian
18 SÈTE
Florensac
Bassin de Thau
Agde
Le Cap d'Agde
Valras-Plage
LION
14
DU



The ruined Barbarossa tower at Gruissan on the Golfe du Lion

GETTING AROUND

Montpellier's international airport serves the region; smaller airports at Carcassonne, Perpignan, and Nîmes have direct flights to the UK. The TGV runs beyond Montpellier to Béziers, and a good rail network connects the main towns. The A61 highway provides access from the west and the A9 follows the coast. The A75 now enters from the north. Smaller roads, even in the mountains, are well maintained. Barges along the Canal du Midi are a leisurely alternative.

KEY

- ▬ Highway
- ▬ Major road
- ▬ Secondary road
- ▬ Minor road
- ▬ Scenic route
- ▬ Main railroad
- ▬ Minor railroad
- ▬ International border
- ▬ Regional border
- ▲ Summit

0 kilometers 25

0 miles 25

Cerdagne ❶

Pyrénées-Orientales. ✈ *Perpignan.*
🚆 🚌 *Mont Louis, Bourg Madame.*
ℹ *Mont Louis (04 68 04 21 97).*
www.mont-louis.net

The remote Cerdagne, an independent state in the Middle Ages, is today divided between Spain and France. Its high plateaus offer skiing and walking among clear mountain lakes and pine and chestnut forests. The Little Yellow Train is an excellent way to sample it in a day. Stops include **Mont Louis**, a town fortified by Vauban, Louis XIV's military architect, which still accommodates French troops; the huge ski resort of **Font-Romeu**, **Latour-de-Carol**, and the tiny village of **Yravals** below it. Nearby **Odeillo** is the site of a huge solar furnace, 150 ft (45 m) tall and 165 ft (50 m) wide. Established in 1969, its giant curved mirrors create a remarkable sight in the valley.

Villefranche-de-Conflent ❷

Pyrénées-Orientales. 👥 *330.* 🚆 🚌
ℹ *pl de l'Eglise (04 68 96 22 96).*

In medieval times Villefranche's position at the narrowest point of the Têt valley made it an eminently defensible fortress against Moorish invasion. Today, fragments of 11th-century walls remain, along with massive ramparts, gates, and Fort Liberia high above the gorge, all built by Vauban in the 17th century. The 12th-century **Eglise de St-Jacques** has fine carved capitals from the workshops of St-Michel-de-Cuxa, and Catalan painted wooden statues, including a 14th-century *Virgin and Child*. The 13th-century oak door is embellished with intricate local wrought ironwork, a craft which still features on many of the shop signs in town. From the streets of locally quarried pink marble you can make the climb up to the **Grottes des Canalettes**, a superb underground setting for concerts. The Little Yellow Train will take you to the magnificent mountain plain of the Cerdagne (phone 04 68 96 63 63 to reserve your seat).

Statue in St-Jacques, Villefranche

THE LITTLE YELLOW TRAIN

Arrive early for the best seats in the railroad cars of *Le Petit Train Jaune* which winds its way on narrow-gauge tracks through gorges and across towering viaducts up into the Cerdagne, stopping at small mountain stations along the way. Built in 1910 to improve access to the mountains, it now operates mainly for tourists, beginning at Villefranche-de-Conflent and terminating at Latour-de-Carol (04 68 96 63 62).

The Little Yellow Train, with open cars for summer visitors

Abbey cloisters of St-Michel-de-Cuxa

St-Michel-de-Cuxa ❸

Prades, Pyrénées-Orientales. ***Tel*** *04 68 96 15 35.* ○ *daily.* ● *Sun am, religious hols.* ♿

Prades, a small, pink marble town in the Têt valley, is typical of the local style. The **Eglise St-Pierre** has a southern Gothic wrought iron belfry and a Baroque Catalan interior. But the town is distinguished by the beautiful pre-Romanesque abbey of St-Michel-de-Cuxa which lies 2 miles (3 km) farther up the valley, and by the legacy of the Spanish cellist Pablo Casals. Casals spent many years here in exile from Franco's Spain; every August the abbey provides the setting for the Prades music festival held in his memory.

An early example of monastic architecture, St-Michel-de-Cuxa abbey was founded by Benedictine monks in 878 and rapidly became renowned throughout France and Spain. Distinctive keyhole arches showing Moorish influence pierce the massive walls of the abbey church, which was consecrated in 974. The mottled pink marble cloisters, with their superbly carved capitals, were added later, in the 12th century.

After the Revolution the building was abandoned, and its famous carvings looted. From 1913, George Grey Bernard, a visiting American artist, began to discover some of the capitals incorporated in local buildings. He sold the carvings to the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York in 1925, where they formed the basis of the Cloisters Museum – a faithful re-creation of a Romanesque abbey in the unlikely setting of Manhattan.

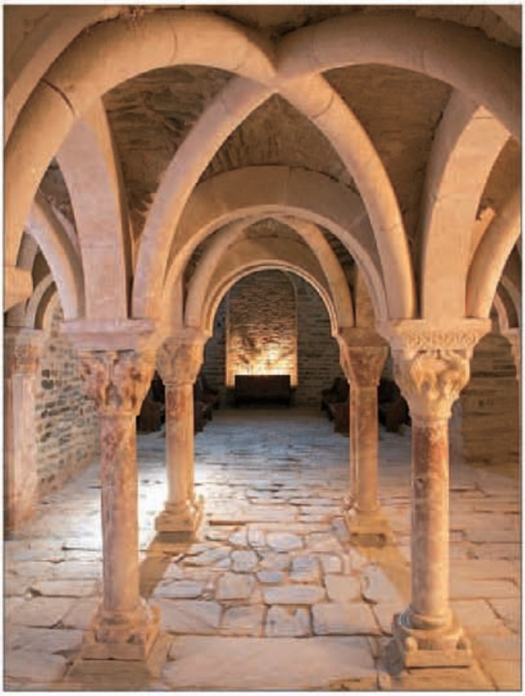
St-Martin-du-Canigou ❹

Casteil. ***Tel*** *04 68 05 50 03.* ○ *(guided tours only: tour lasts one hour; times vary with seasons) Easter–Sep: daily; Oct–Easter: Tue–Sun.* ● *Jan.* 🎟

Nun at St-Martin

Saint-Martin-du-Canigou is situated in a spectacularly remote site a third of the way up Pic du Canigou, on a jagged spur of rock approached only by jeep or a 40-minute climb on foot from Casteil or by renting a jeep from Vernet-les-Bains. The abbey was built between 1001 and 1026, and financed by Guifred, Count of Cerdagne, who abandoned his family and entered the monastery in 1035. He was buried there 14 years later in a tomb he carved from the rock himself, which can still be seen. The church is early Romanesque, based on a simple basilican plan. Two churches are built, quite literally one on top of the other, making the lower church the crypt for the upper building.

The abbey complex is best viewed from above by continuing up the path. From there, its irregular design clinging to the rock is framed by the dramatic mountain setting – the ensemble a tribute to the ingenuity and vitality of its early builders.



Serrabone priory's chapel tribune, with columns of local marble

The 11th-century cloister of St-Martin-du-Canigou

Prieuré de Serrabone ❺

Boule d'Amont. ***Tel*** *04 68 84 09 30 (tourist office).* ○ *daily.* ● *Jan 1, May 1, Nov 1, Dec 25.* 🎟

Perched high up on the northern flanks of Pic du Canigou, the sacred mountain of the Catalans, is the priory of Serrabone. A final lap of hairpin bends on the approach road (the D618) reveals the simple square tower and round apse of this remote Romanesque abbey, surrounded by a botanical garden of local herbs and woodland plants clinging to the mountainside.

Inside the cool, austere 12th-century building is a surprisingly elaborate chapel tribune, its columns and arches glowing from the local red-veined marble, carved by the anonymous Master of Cuxa, whose work appears throughout the region. Note the strange beasts and verdant flora featured in the capital carvings, especially the rose of Roussillon.

Céret ❻

Pyrénées-Orientales. 👥 *8,000.* 🚌 ℹ *av Clémenceau (04 68 87 00 53).* *Sat, Tue eve Jul–Aug.* *Fête des Cerises (May/Jun).* **www**.ot-ceret.fr

Céret is a cherry town, surrounded by a cloud of pink blossom in the early spring, and producing the very first fruits of the year. The tiled and painted façades and loggias of the buildings have a Spanish feel and the town was popular with Picasso, Braque, and Matisse. Today Céret is distinguished by the **Musée d'Art Moderne**, its sophisticated modern architecture housing a remarkable collection which includes Catalan artists Tapiès and Capdeville, 50 works donated by Picasso, including a series of bowls painted with bullfighting scenes, and works by Matisse, Chagall, Juan Gris, and Salvador Dalí.

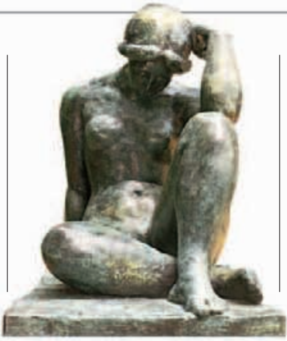
The town's Catalan heritage is evident in regular bullfights held in the arena, and in its Sardana dance festivals in July.

🏛 Musée d'Art Moderne

8 bd Maréchal Joffre. ***Tel*** *04 68 87 27 76.* ○ *Apr–Sep: daily; Oct–Mar: Wed–Mon.* ● *some public hols.* ♿ **www**.musee-ceret.com

Environs

From Céret the D115 follows the Tech valley to the spa town of **Amélie-les-Bains**, where fragments of Roman baths have been discovered. Beyond, in **Arles-sur-Tech**, the Eglise de Ste-Marie contains 12th-century frescoes, and a sarcophagus beside the church door which, according to local legend, produces drops of unaccountably pure water every year.



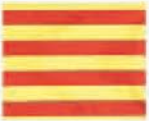
Statue by Aristide Maillol, Banyuls

Côte Vermeille ❼

Pyrénées-Orientales. ✈ *Perpignan.* 🚆 *Collioure, Cerbère.* 🚌 *Collioure, Banyuls-sur-Mer.* ℹ *Collioure (04 68 82 15 47), Cerbère (04 68 88 42 36).* **www**.collioure.com

Here the Pyrenees meet the Mediterranean, the coast road twisting and turning around secluded pebbly coves and rocky outcrops. The *vermeille* (vermilion-tinted) rock of the headlands gives this stretch of coast, the loveliest in the region, its name.

The Côte Vermeille extends all the way to the Costa Brava in northern Spain. With its Catalan character, it is as redolent of Spain as of France. **Argelès-Plage** has three sandy beaches and a palm-fringed promenade, and is the largest camping center in Europe. The small resort of **Cerbère** is the last French town before the border, flying the red and gold Catalan flag to signal its true allegiance. All along the coast, terraced vineyards cling to the rocky hillsides, producing strong, sweet wines like Banyuls and Muscat. The difficult terrain makes harvesting a laborious process. Vines were first cultivated here by Greek settlers in the 7th century BC, and Banyuls itself has wine cellars dating back to the Middle Ages.



Catalan flag

Banyuls is also famous as the birthplace of Aristide Maillol, the 19th-century sculptor, whose work can be seen all over the region. **Port Vendres**, with fortifications built by the indefatigable Vauban (architect to Louis XIV) is a fishing port, renowned for its anchovies and sardines.

The spectacular Côte Vermeille, seen from the coast road south of Banyuls

Collioure harbor, with one of its beaches and the Eglise Notre-Dame-des-Anges

Collioure ⑧

Pyrénées-Orientales. 👥 *3,000.*
🚆 🚌 ℹ *pl du 18 juin (04 68 82 15 47).* 🛒 *Wed & Sun.*
www.collioure.com

The colors of Collioure first attracted Matisse here in 1905: brightly stuccoed houses sheltered by cypresses and gaily painted fishing boats, all bathed in the famous luminous light and washed by a gentle sea. Other artists including André Derain worked here under Matisse's influence and were dubbed *fauves* (wild beasts) for their wild experiments with color. Art galleries and souvenir stores now fill the cobbled streets, but this small fishing port has changed surprisingly little since then, with anchovies still its main business. Three salting houses are evidence of this tradition.

Three sheltered beaches, both pebble and sand, nestle around the harbor, dominated by the bulk of the **Château Royal**, which forms part of the harbor wall. It was first built by the Knights Templar in the 13th century, and Collioure became the main port of entry for Perpignan, remaining under the rule of Spanish Aragon until France took over in 1659. The outer fortifications were reinforced ten years later by Vauban, who demolished much of the original town in the process. Today the château can be toured, or visited for its exhibitions of modern art.

The **Eglise Notre-Dame-des-Anges** on Collioure's quayside was rebuilt in the 17th century to replace the church which was destroyed by Vauban. A former lighthouse was incorporated as a belltower. Inside the church are no fewer than five Baroque altarpieces by Joseph Sunyer and other Catalan masters of the genre.

Be warned that Collioure is extremely popular in July and August, with visitors cramming the tiny streets. Long lines of traffic are possible, too, though the building of another route, the D86, has helped to ease congestion.

⌂ Château Royal
Tel *04 68 82 06 43.* ○ *daily.*
● *Jan 1, May 1 & Dec 25.* ♿

Elne ⑨

Pyrénées-Orientales. 👥 *6,500.* 🚆 🚌
ℹ *pl Sant-Jordi (04 68 22 05 07).*
🛒 *Mon, Wed, Fri.* **www**.ot-elne.fr

The ancient town of Elne accommodated Hannibal and his elephants in 218 BC on his epic journey to Rome, and was one of the most important towns in Roussillon until the 16th century. Today it is famed for the 11th-century **Cathédrale de Ste-Eulalie et Ste-Julie**, with its superb cloister. Milky blue-veined marble has been carved into exquisite capitals, embellished with a riot of flowers, figures, and arabesques. The side nearest the cathedral dates from the 1100s; the remaining three are 13th–14th-century. From the front of the cathedral are views of the vines and orchards of the surrounding plain.

Carved capital at Elne, showing "The Dream of the Magi"

Entrance to the Palais des Rois de Majorque, Perpignan

Perpignan ⑩

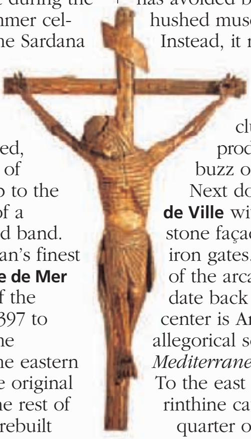
Pyrénées-Orientales. 👥 *108,000.*
✈ 🚆 🚌 ℹ *Palais des Congrès (04 68 66 30 30).* ○ *daily.*
www.perpignantourisme.com

Catalan Perpignan has a distinctly southern feel, with palm trees lining the Têt river promenade, house and store façades painted vibrant turquoise and pink, and the streets of the Arab quarter selling aromatic spices, couscous, and paella.

Today Perpignan is the vibrant capital of Roussillon, and has an important position on the developing Mediterranean sunbelt. But it reached its zenith in the 13th and 14th centuries under the kings of Majorca and the kings of Aragón, who controlled great swathes of northern Spain and southern France. Their vast **Palais des Rois de Majorque** still straddles a substantial area in the southern part of the city.

Perpignan's strong Catalan identity is evident during the twice-weekly summer celebrations when the Sardana is danced in the place de la Loge. It is a key Catalan symbol. Arms raised, concentric circles of dancers keep step to the accompaniment of a Catalan woodwind band.

One of Perpignan's finest buildings, the **Loge de Mer** lies at the head of the square. Built in 1397 to house the Maritime Exchange, only the eastern section retains the original Gothic design. The rest of the building was rebuilt in Renaissance style in 1540 with sumptuous carved wooden ceilings and sculpted window frames. While visitors are sometimes offended by the sight of a fast-food restaurant inside, the result is that the Loge de Mer has avoided becoming a hushed museum piece. Instead, it remains the center of Perpignan life – elegant cafés cluster around it, producing a constant buzz of activity.



Devout Christ in St-Jean

Next door is the **Hôtel de Ville** with its pebble stone façade and wrought iron gates. Inside, parts of the arcaded courtyard date back to 1315; at the center is Aristide Maillol's allegorical sculpture, *The Mediterranean* (1950).

To the east is the labyrinthine cathedral quarter of St-Jean, made up of small streets and squares containing some fine 14th- and 15th-century buildings.

THE ANNUAL PROCESSION DE LA SANCH

There is a very Catalan atmosphere in Perpignan during the annual Good Friday procession of the Confraternity of La Sanch (Brotherhood of the Holy Blood). Originally dedicated to the comfort of condemned prisoners in the 15th century, members of the brotherhood still wear macabre red or black robes as they carry sacred relics and the crucifix from the Chapel of the Devout Christ to the cathedral.

✝ Cathédrale St-Jean

Pl de Gambetta. ○ *daily.*

Topped by a wrought iron belfry, this cathedral was begun in 1324 and was finally ready for use in 1509. It is constructed almost entirely from river pebbles layered with red brick, a style common throughout the region due to the scarcity of other building materials.

Inside the gloomy interior the nave is flanked by gilded altarpieces and painted wooden statues, with a massive pre-Romanesque marble font. A cloistered cemetery adjoins the church and the Chapel of the Devout Christ with its precious, poignantly realistic medieval wooden Crucifixion. The cathedral replaced the 11th-century church of St-Jean-le-Vieux, whose superb Romanesque doorway can be glimpsed to the left of the main entrance. Some areas may be restricted due to ongoing restoration work.

Palais des Rois de Majorque

2 rue des Archers. ***Tel** 04 68 34 48 29.* ○ *daily.* ● *Jan 1, May 1, Nov 1, Dec 25.* 🎫

Access to the vast 13th-century fortified palace of the Kings of Majorca is as circuitous today as it was intended to be for invading soldiers. Flights of steps zigzag within the sheer red-brick ramparts, begun in the 15th century and added to successively over the next two centuries. Eventually, the elegant gardens and substantial castle within are revealed, entered by way of the Tour de l'Hommage, from the top of which is a panoramic view of city, mountains, and sea.

The palace itself is built around a central arcaded courtyard, flanked on one side by the Salle de Majorque, a great hall with a triple fireplace and giant Gothic arched windows. Adjacent, two royal chapels built one above the other show southern Gothic style at its best: pointed arches, patterned frescoes, and elaborate tilework demonstrating a distinct Moorish influence. The fine rose marble doorway of the upper King's Chapel is typical of the Roussillon Romanesque style, although the sculpted capitals are Gothic. Today the great courtyard is sometimes used for concerts.

Courtyard in the Hôtel de Ville

Musée d'Arts et de Traditions Populaires du Roussillon

Le Castillet. ***Tel** 04 68 35 42 05.* ○ *Wed–Mon.* ● *Jan 1, May 1, Nov 1.* 🎫

The red-brick tower and pink belfry of the Castillet, built as the town gate in 1368, was at one time a prison and is all that remains of the town walls. It now houses a collection of Catalan craft objects, agricultural implements, kitchen furniture, looms, and terra cotta pots for storing water and oil. It also holds art exhibitions.

Musée Rigaud

16 rue de l'Ange. ***Tel** 04 68 35 43 40.* ○ *May–Sep: pm only.* ● *public hols.* 🎫 ♿

This magnificent 18th-century mansion has an eclectic art collection dominated by the work of Hyacinthe Rigaud (1659–1743), who was born in Perpignan and was court painter to Louis XIV and Louis XV. The first floor has a room of portraits, including works by David, Greuze, and Ingres; the Dufy, Picasso, and Maillol room; and the Primitifs Catalan, 14th–16th-century Catalan and Spanish paintings, among them the *Retable de la Trinité* (1489) by the Master of Canapost.

The museum also represents the 20th century: Alechinsky, Appel, and others from the late 1940s European Cobra movement; the Catalan artist Pierre Daura; and modern Roussillon painters like Brune, Terrus, and Violet.

The pebble and red-brick Cathédrale de St-Jean in Perpignan

Fort tower and ramparts, Salses

Salses ⑪

Pyrénées-Orientales. 👥 *2,500.* 🚆 🚌 ℹ *pl de la République (04 68 38 66 13).* ⊖ *Wed.*

Looking like a giant sand-castle against the ocher earth of the Corbières vineyards, the **Fort de Salses** stands at the old frontier of Spain and France. It guards the narrow defile between the mountains and the Mediterranean lagoons, and was built by King Ferdinand of Aragon between 1497 and 1506 to defend Spain's possession of Roussillon. Its massive walls and rounded towers are a classic example of Spanish military architecture, designed to deflect the new threat posed by gunpowder.

Inside were underground stabling for 300 horses and a subterranean passageway around the inner courtyard.

There is a wonderful view from the keep over the lagoons and surrounding coastline.

Vineyards covering the hilly terrain of the Corbières

Corbières ⑫

Aude. ✈ *Perpignan.* 🚆 *Narbonne, Carcassonne, Lézignan-Corbières.* 🚌 *Narbonne, Carcassonne, Lézignan-Corbières.* ℹ *Lézignan-Corbières (04 68 27 05 42).*
www.lezignan-corbieres.fr/tourisme

Still one of the wildest parts of France with few roads, let alone villages, the Corbières is best known for its wine and the great craggy hulks of the Cathar castles *(see p491)*. Much of the land is untamed *garrigue* (scrubland), fragrant with honeysuckle and broom; south-facing slopes have been cleared and planted with vines.

To the south are the spectacular medieval castles of **Peyrepertuse** and **Quéribus**, the latter one of the last Cathar strongholds. The guided visits around the remarkable Cathar château at **Villerouge-Termenes** reveal some of its turbulent past. To the west is the barren, uninhabited Razès area in the upper Aude valley. Its best-kept secret is the village of **Alet-les-Bains**, with beautifully preserved half-timbered houses and the remains of a Benedictine abbey, battle-scarred from the Wars of Religion.

Narbonne ⑬

Aude. 👥 *48,000.* 🚆 🚌 ℹ *pl Roger Salengro (04 68 65 15 60).* 🛒 *Thu & Sun.*
www.mairie-narbonne.fr

Narbonne is a medium-sized, cheerful town profiting from the booming wine region that surrounds it. The town is bisected by the tree-shaded Canal de la Robine; to the north is the restored medieval quarter with many elegant stores and good restaurants. Located here is one of Narbonne's most intriguing tourist attractions, the **Horreum**. This underground warren of granaries and grain chutes dates from the 1st century BC, when Narbonne was a major port and capital of the largest Roman province in Gaul.

The town prospered through the Middle Ages until the 15th century when the harbor silted up and the course of the river Aude altered, taking Narbonne's fortunes with it. By then, an important bishopric had been established and an ambitious cathedral project, modeled on the great Gothic cathedrals of the North, was underway. However, the full grandiose design was abandoned and just the chancel, begun in 1272, became the **Cathédrale St-Just et St-Pasteur** we see today.

It is still enormous, enhanced by 14th-century sculptures, fine stained-glass windows, and an 18th-century carved organ. Aubusson and Gobelin tapestries adorn the walls, and the Chapel of the Anonciade houses a treasury of manuscripts, jeweled reliquaries and tapestries.

The unfinished transept now forms a courtyard, and between the cathedral and the **Palais des Archevêques** (Archbishops' Palace), lie cloisters with four galleries of 14th-century vaulting.

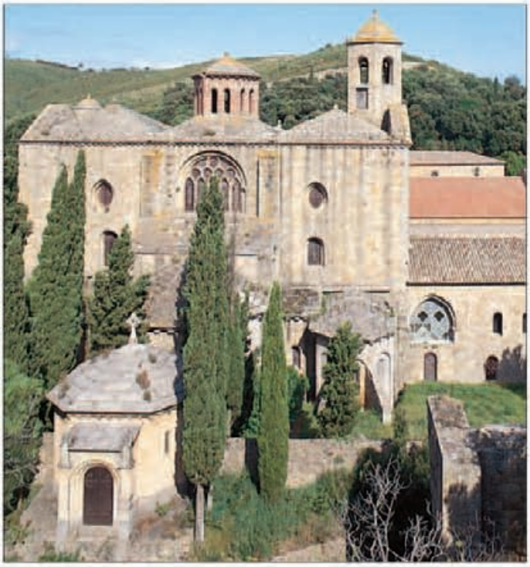
This huge palace and cathedral complex dominates the center of Narbonne. Between the Palais des Archevêques' massive 14th-century towers is the town hall, with a 19th-century Neo-Gothic façade by Viollet-le-Duc *(see p200)*, the architect who so determinedly

The vaulted chancel of Cathédrale St-Just et St-Pasteur in Narbonne

CANAL DU MIDI

From Sète to Toulouse the 149-mile (240-km) Canal du Midi flows between plane trees, vineyards, and villages. The complex system of locks, aqueducts, and bridges is a remarkable feat of engineering, built by the Béziers salt-tax baron Paul Riquet. Completed in 1681, it encouraged Languedoc trade and established a vital link, via the Garonne river, between the Atlantic and the Mediterranean. Today it is plied by vacation barges (www.canal-du-midi.org).

Tranquil waterway of the Canal du Midi



The Cistercian Abbaye de Fontfroide (1093), southwest of Narbonne

restored medieval France. The palace itself is divided into the Palais Vieux (Old Palace) and the Palais Neuf (New Palace). Narbonne's most important museums are in the Palais Neuf, on the left as you enter through the low medieval arches of the passage de l'Ancre. The **Musée d'Archéologie et de Préhistoire** collection includes fragments of Narbonne's Roman heritage, from milestones and parts of the original walls to an assemblage of domestic objects, coins, tools, and glassware. The **Chapelle de la Madeleine** is decorated with a 14th-century wall painting and houses a collection of Greek vases, sarcophagi, and mosaics.

In the archbishops' former apartments is the **Musée d'Art et d'Histoire**, which is as interesting for its luxurious furnishings and richly decorated ceilings as for its art collection. This includes some fine paintings by Canaletto, Brueghel, Boucher, and Veronese as well as a large selection of local earthenware.

South of the Canal de la Robine are a number of fine mansions, including the Renaissance **Maison des Trois Nourrices** on the corner of rue des Trois-Nourrices and rue Edgard-Quinet. Nearby is the **Musée Lapidaire**, with architectural fragments from Gallo-Roman Narbonne, and the 13th-century Gothic **Basilique St-Paul-Serge**. The present building retains the crypt and some sarcophagi of an earlier church on this site.

∩ Horreum
Rue Rouget-de-l'Isle. ***Tel*** *04 68 90 30 54.* ○ *Apr–Sep: daily; Oct–Mar: Tue–Sun.* ● *Jan 1, May 1, Nov 1 & 11, Dec 25.* 🎟

🏛 Musée d'Archéologie et de Préhistoire/Musée d'Art et d'Histoire
Palais des Archevêques. ***Tel*** *04 68 90 30 54.* ○ *Apr–Oct: daily; Nov–Mar: Tue–Sun.* ● *Jan 1, May 1, Nov 1 & 11, Dec 25.* 🎟

🏛 Musee Lapidaire
Eglise Notre-Dame de Lamourguié. ***Tel*** *04 68 90 30 54.* ○ *Apr–Sep: daily; Oct–Mar: Tue–Sun.* ● *Jan 1, May 1, Nov 1 & 11, Dec 25.* 🎟 ♿

Environs

Southwest (8 miles/13 km), the Cistercian **Abbaye de Fontfroide** has an elegant cloister. The abbey is tucked away in a quiet valley, surrounded by cypress trees.

Golfe du Lion ⑭

Aude, Hérault. ✈ 🚆 🚌 *Montpellier.* ⛴ *Sète.* ℹ *La Grande Motte (04 67 56 42 00).* **www**.ot-lagrandemotte.fr

Languedoc-Roussillon's shoreline (65 miles/100 km) forms an almost unbroken sweep of sandy beach. Only at its southern limits does it break into the rocky inlets of the Côte Vermeille. Purpose-built resorts created since the 1960s emphasize eco-friendly, low-rise family accommodations, some in local styles, others with imaginative architecture.

La Grande Motte marina has distinctive ziggurat-style buildings *(see p495)*. **Cap d'Agde** has Europe's largest naturist quarter. Inland **Agde**, founded by ancient Greek traders, is built of black basalt and has a fortified cathedral. **Port Leucate** and **Port Bacarès** are ideal for watersports. An older town is **Sète** *(see p492)*. A feature of the flat Languedoc coast is its étangs – large shallow lagoons. Those nearest the Camargue are the haunt of thousands of wading birds.

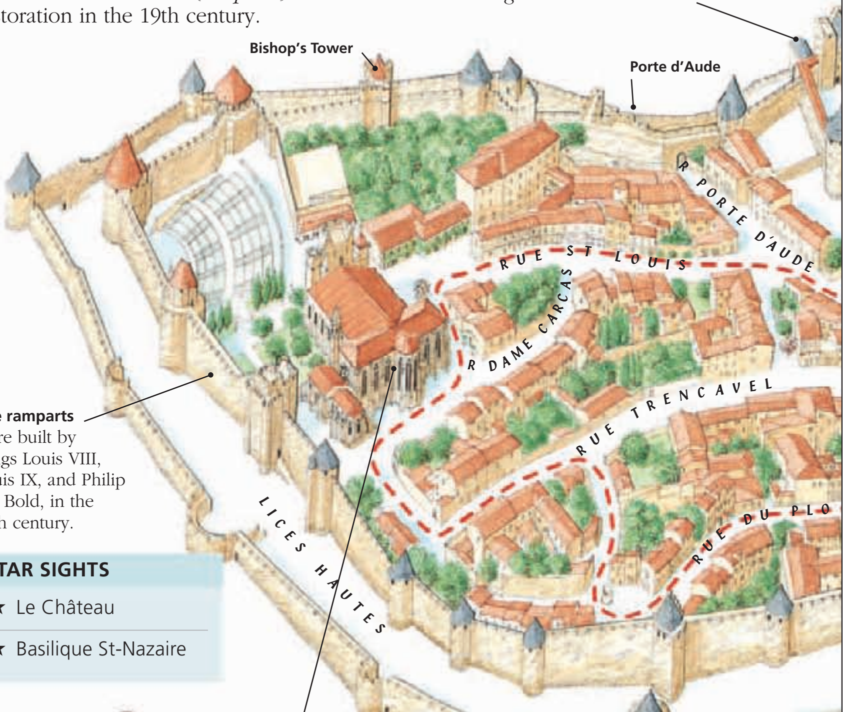
A wide, sandy beach on the Cap d'Agde

Carcassonne ⓯

The citadel of Carcassonne is a perfectly restored medieval town, and protected by UNESCO. It crowns a steep bank above the river Aude, a fairy-tale sight of turrets and ramparts overlooking the Basse Ville below. The strategic position of the citadel between the Atlantic and the Mediterranean and on the corridor between the Iberian peninsula and the rest of Europe led to its original settlement, consolidated by the Romans in the 2nd century BC. It became a key element in medieval military conflicts. At its zenith in the 12th century, it was ruled by the Trencavels who built the château and cathedral. Military advances and the Treaty of the Pyrenees in 1659, which relocated the French–Spanish border, hastened its decline. The attentions of architectural historian Viollet-le-Duc *(see p200)* led to its restoration in the 19th century.

The Restored Citadel
Restoration of La Cité has always been controversial. Critics complain it looks too new, favoring a more romantic ruin.

★ Le Château
A fortress within a fortress, the château has a moat, five towers, and defensive wooden galleries on the walls.



The ramparts were built by Kings Louis VIII, Louis IX, and Philip the Bold, in the 13th century.

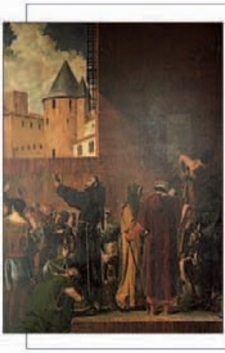
STAR SIGHTS

- ★ Le Château
- ★ Basilique St-Nazaire

★ Basilique St-Nazaire
Within the Romanesque and Gothic cathedral is the famous Siege Stone, said to depict the 1209 Siege of Carcassonne by crusaders.

0 meters 50
0 yards 50
KEY
Suggested route

For hotels and restaurants in this region see pp588–90 and pp643–6



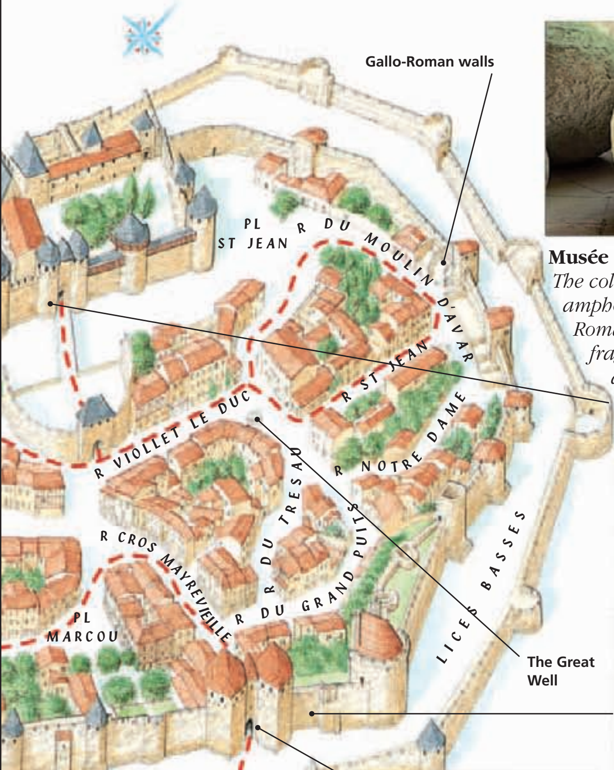
RELIGIOUS PERSECUTION

Carcassonne's strategic position meant it was often at the center of religious conflict. The Cathars *(see p491)* were given sanctuary here in 1209 by Raymond-Roger Trencavel when besieged by Simon de Montfort in his crusade against heresy. In the 14th century the Inquisition continued to root out the Cathars. This painting depicts intended victims in the Inquisition Tower.

***Les Emmurés de Carcassonne*, JP Laurens**

VISITORS' CHECKLIST

Aude. 👥 *46,000.* ✈ *2 miles (4 km) W Carcassonne.* 🚆 *Port du Canal du Midi.* 🚌 *bd de Varsovie.* ℹ *28 rue Verdun (04 68 10 24 30).* ⛺ *Tue, Thu, & Sat.* 🎪 *Festival de Carcassonne (Jul); l'Embrasement de la Cité (14 Jul); Les Spectacles Médiévaux (Jul–Aug).*
Le Château ○ *daily.* ● *Jan 1, May 1, Nov 1 & 11, Dec 25.* ♿
www.carcassonne.org



Gallo-Roman walls

The Great Well

Main entrance to La Cité

The *lices*, the easily defended spaces between the inner and outer ramparts, were also used for jousting, crossbow practice and for storage of timber and other materials.

Musée Lapidaire
The collection includes Roman amphorae and terra cotta, Romanesque murals, and fragments from the cathedral, a set of Gothic windows, and these medieval stone missiles.

Porte Narbonnaise
Flanked by two sandstone towers, built in 1280, the defenses included two portcullises, two iron doors, a moat, and a drawbridge.

Old City Entrance
Entering La Cité is still a step back in time, although it is one of France's top tourist destinations, filled with souvenir stores.

Béziers with its medieval cathedral, seen from Pont Vieux in the southwest

Minerve ⑯

Hérault. 👥 *100.* ℹ *rue des Martyrs (04 68 91 81 43).* **www**.minerve-tourisme.com

In the parched, arid hills of the Minervois, surrounded by vines and not much else, Minerve appears defiant on its rocky outcrop at the confluence of the rivers Cesse and Briant. It is defended by what the Minervois call the "Candela" (Candle), an octagonal tower which is all that remains of the medieval château. In 1210, the small town resisted the vengeful Simon de Montfort, scourge of the Cathars, in a siege lasting seven weeks. This culminated in the execution of 140 Cathars, who were burned at the stake.

Today visitors enter Minerve by a high bridge spanning the gorge. Turn right and follow the route of the Cathars past the Romanesque arch of the Porte des Templiers to the 12th-century **Eglise St-Etienne**. Outside the church is a crudely carved dove, symbol of the Cathars, and within is a 5th-century white marble altar table, one of the oldest artifacts in the region.

A rocky path follows the riverbed below the town, where the water has cut out caves and two bridges – the Grand Pont and the Petit Pont – from the soft limestone.

Béziers ⑰

Hérault. 👥 *70,000.* ✈ 🚆 🚌 ℹ *29 av Saint Saëns (04 67 76 84 00).* 🛒 *Fri.* **www**.beziers-tourisme.fr

Famous for its bullfights and rugby, and the wine of the surrounding region, Béziers has several other points of interest. The town seems turned in on itself, its roads leading up to the massive 14th-century **Cathédrale St-Nazaire**, with its fine sculpture, stained glass, and frescoes. In 1209, several thousand citizens were massacred in the crusade against the Cathars. The papal legate's troops were ordered not to discriminate between Catholics and Cathars, but to "Kill them all. God will recognize his own!"

Statue of the engineer Paul Riquet in the allées Paul Riquet, Béziers

The **Musée du Biterrois** holds exhibitions on local history, wine, and the Canal du Midi, engineered in the late 17th century by Paul Riquet, Béziers' most famous son *(see p486)*. His statue presides over the Allées Paul Riquet, the broad esplanade at the foot of the hill. This is lined by two double rows of plane trees and large canopied restaurants, a civilized focus to this otherwise business-like town.

🏛 Musée du Biterrois
Caserne St-Jacques. ***Tel*** *04 67 36 81 60.* ○ *Tue–Sun.* ● *Jan 1, Easter, May 1, Dec 25.* 🎟 ♿

Environs

Overlooking the Béziers plain and the mountains to the north is Oppidum d'Ensérune, a superb Roman site with substantial foundations. The **Musée de l'Oppidum d'Ensérune** has a good archeological collection, from Celtic, Greek, and Roman vases to jewelry, funeral fragments, and weapons.

The **Château de Raissac** (between Béziers and Lignan) houses an unusual 19th-century faïence museum in its stables (Fri, Sat and Mon pms).

🏛 Musée de l'Oppidum d'Ensérune
Nissan lez Ensérune. ***Tel*** *04 67 37 01 23.* ○ *daily; Oct–Apr: Tue–Sun.* ● *public hols.* 🎟 ♿ *limited.*

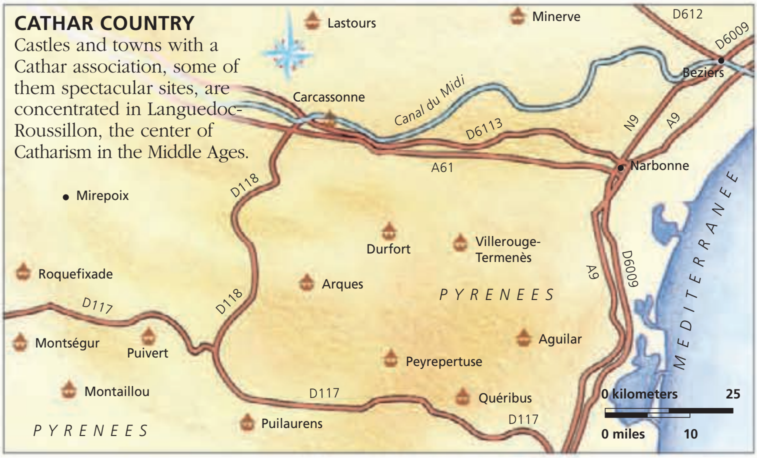
The Cathars

The Cathars (from Greek *katharos*, meaning pure) were a 13th-century Christian sect critical of corruption in the established church. Cathar dissent flourished in independent Languedoc as an expression of separatism, but the rebellion was rapidly exploited for political purposes. Peter II of Aragon was keen to annex Languedoc, and Philippe II of France joined forces with the pope to crush the Cathar heretics in a crusade led by Simon de Montfort in 1209. This heralded the start of over a century of ruthless killing and torture.

CATHAR CASTLES
The Cathars took refuge in the defensive castles of the Corbières and Ariège. Peyrepertuse is one of the most remote, difficult to reach even today: a long, narrow stone citadel hacked from a high, craggy peak over 2,000 ft (609 m) high.

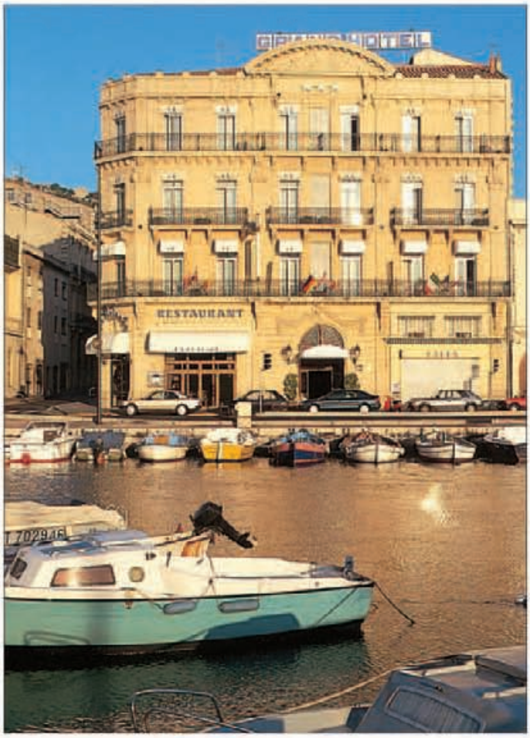
Cathars *(also known as Albigensians) believed in the duality of good and evil. They considered the material world entirely evil. To be truly pure they had to renounce the world, and be non-violent, vegetarian, and sexually abstinent.*

The crusade *against the Cathars was vicious. Heretics' land was promised to the crusaders by the pope, who assured forgiveness in advance of their crimes. In 1209, 20,000 citizens were massacred in Béziers and, the following year, 140 were burned to death in Minerve. In 1244, 225 Cathars died defending one of their last fortresses at Montségur.*



CATHAR COUNTRY
Castles and towns with a Cathar association, some of them spectacular sites, are concentrated in Languedoc-Roussillon, the center of Catharism in the Middle Ages.

Lastours
Minerve
D612
D6009
Beziers
Carcassonne
Canal du Midi
D6113
N9
A9
A61
Narbonne
Mirepoix
D118
Durfort
Villerouge-Termenès
Roquefixade
Arques
PYRENEES
A9
D6009
D117
D118
Montségur
Puivert
Aguilar
MEDITERRANEE
Peyrepertuse
Montaillou
D117
Quéribus
0 kilometers 25
D117
0 miles 10
Puilaurens
PYRENEES



The impressive Grand Hôtel *(see p590)* on quai de la Résistance, Sète

Sète ⑱

Hérault. 👥 *40,400.* 🚆 🚌 ⛴
ℹ *60 grand' rue Mario Roustan (04 67 74 71 71)* ⛱ *Wed & Fri.*
www.ot-sete.fr

Sète is a major fishing and industrial port. It has a gutsier, more raffish air than much of the leisure-oriented Mediterranean, with its stores selling ships' lamps and propellers, and its quayside restaurants full of hungry sailors demolishing vast platters of mussels, oysters, and sea snails straight off the boat. Most of Sète's restaurants can be found in a stroll along the Grand Canal, with its Italianate houses painted in pastel colors and with wrought iron balconies overlooking Sète's network of canals and bridges. Boisterous water jousting tournaments, dating back to 1666, form part of the patron saint's festival in August *(see p37)*.

Cimetière Marin in Sète, burial place of the poet Paul Valéry

The **Musée International des Arts Modestes** displays everyday objects (including some by well-known contemporary designers) in amusing new contexts, within a renovated canalside warehouse.

Above the town is the **Cimetière Marin**, where Sète's most famous son, poet Paul Valéry (1871–1945), is buried. There is a small museum and breathtaking views of the coast and the mountains.

🏛 Musée International des Arts Modestes
23 quai du Maréchal de Lattre de Tassigny. ***Tel*** *04 67 18 64 00.*
○ *Tue–Sun.* ● *public hols.* 🎟 ♿
www.miam.org

Pézenas ⑲

Hérault. 👥 *8,000.* 🚌 ℹ *pl Gambetta (04 67 98 36 40).* ⛱ *Sat.*
www.pezenas-tourisme.fr

Pezenas is a compact and charming little town easily appreciated in a gentle stroll of its main sights, and abounding in revealing small details, fragmentary evidence of its past brilliance as the seat of local government in the 16th–17th centuries. Then the town also played artistic host to many glittering troupes of musicians and actors, including Molière.

Best of all are the glimpses of fine houses through courtyard doorways, such as the **Hôtel des Barons de Lacoste**, at 8 rue François-Oustrin, with its beautiful stone staircase, and the **Maison des Pauvres** at 12 rue Alfred Sabatier, with its three galleries and staircase.

Look out for the medieval store window on rue Triperie-Vieille, and just within the 14th-century **Porte Faugères** (Faugères Gate) the narrow streets of the Jewish ghetto, which has a chilling feeling of enclosure. Stores selling antiques, second-hand goods, and books abound. All around the town, vines stretch as far as the eye can see.

The stone foyer of the Hôtel des Barons de Lacoste in Pézenas

Parc Régional du Haut Languedoc ⑳

Hérault, Tarn. ✈ *Béziers.*
🚆 *Béziers, Bédarieux.* 🚌 *St-Pons-de-Thomières, Mazamet, Lamalou-les-Bains* ℹ *St-Pons-de-Thomières (04 67 97 38 22).*
www.parc-haut-languedoc.fr

The high limestone plateaus and wooded slopes of upper Languedoc are a world away from the coast. From the Montagne Noire, a mountainous region between Béziers and Castres, up into the Cévennes is a landscape of remote sheep farms, eroded rock formations, and deep river gorges. Much of this area has been designated the Parc Régional du Haut Languedoc, the second largest of the French national parks after Ecrins.

St-Pons-de-Thomières is the entrance, with access to forest and mountain trails for walking and riding, plus a wildlife research center, where one can glimpse the mouflons (wild mountain sheep), eagles and wild boar which were once a common sight in the region.

If you take the D908 from St-Pons through the park you pass the village of **Olargues** with its 12th-century bridge over the river Jaur. **Lamalou-les-Bains**, on the park's eastern edge, is a small spa town with a restored Belle Epoque spa building and theater, and a soporifically slow pace.

Outside the park boundaries to the northeast there are spectacular natural phenomena. At the **Cirque de Navacelles**, the river Vis has joined up with itself, carving out an entire island. On it sits the peaceful village of Navacelles, visible from the road higher up. The **Grotte des Demoiselles** is one of the most magnificent in an area full of caves, where you walk through a calcified world. A funicular train takes visitors from the foot of the mountain to the top.

The **Grotte de Clamouse** is also an extraordinary experience, the reflections from underground rivers and pools flickering on the cavern roofs, with stalagmites resembling dripping candles.

Extraordinary limestone formations at the Grotte de Clamouse

Grotte des Demoiselles
St-Bauzille-de-Putois. ***Tel*** *04 67 73 70 02.* ○ *daily.* ● *Jan, Dec 25.* ♿
www.demoiselles.com

Grotte de Clamouse
Rte de St-Guilhem-le-Désert, St-Jean-de-Fos. ***Tel*** *04 67 57 71 05.*
○ *Feb–mid-Nov: daily.* ♿
www.clamouse.com

Apse of St-Guilhem-le-Désert

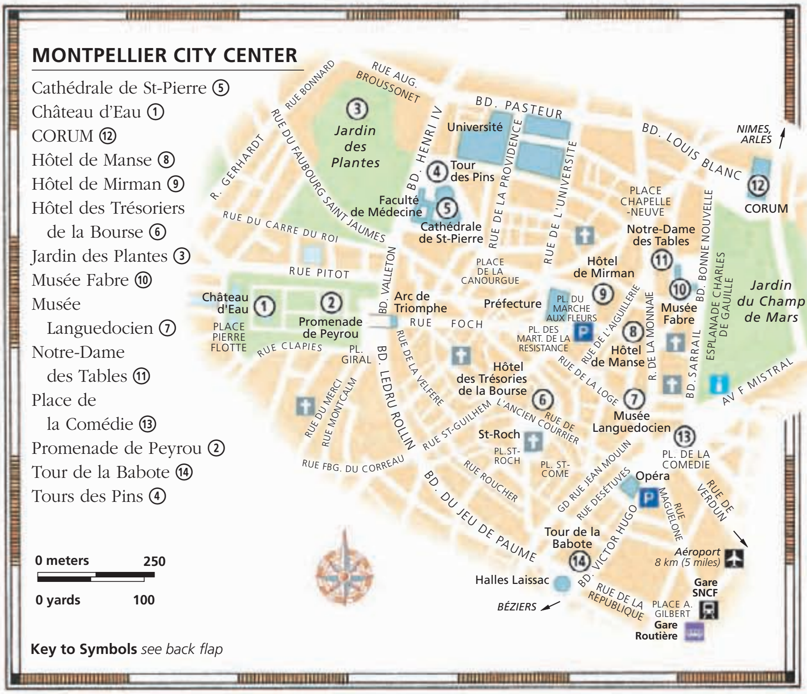
St-Guilhem-le-Désert ㉑

Hérault. 👥 *250.* 🚌 ℹ *Maison Communale (04 67 57 44 33).*
www.saintguilhem-valleeherault.fr

Tucked away in the Celette mountains, St-Guilhem-le-Désert is no longer as remote as when Guillaume of Aquitaine retired here as a hermit in the 9th century. After a lifetime as a soldier, Guillaume received a fragment of the True Cross from Emperor Charlemagne and established a monastery in this ravine above the river Hérault.

Vestiges of the first 10th-century church have been discovered but most of the building is a superb example of 11th–12th-century Romanesque architecture. Its lovely apsidal chapels dominate the heights of the village, behind which the carved doorway opens on to a central square.

Within the church is a somber barrel-vaulted central aisle leading to the sunlit central apse. Only two galleries of the cloisters remain: the rest are in New York, along with carvings from St-Michel-de-Cuxa *(see p481)*.


MONTPELLIER CITY CENTER
Cathédrale de St-Pierre ⑤
Château d'Eau ①
CORUM ⑫
Hôtel de Manse ⑧
Hôtel de Mirman ⑨
Hôtel des Trésoriers de la Bourse ⑥
Jardin des Plantes ③
Musée Fabre ⑩
Musée Languedocien ⑦
Notre-Dame des Tables ⑪
Place de la Comédie ⑬
Promenade de Peyrou ②
Tour de la Babote ⑭
Tours des Pins ④
0 meters 250
0 yards 100
Key to Symbols see back flap
RUE BONNARD
RUE AUG. BROUSSONET
BD. PASTEUR
Jardin des Plantes
Université
BD. LOUIS BLANC
NIMES, ARLES
R. GERHARDT
RUE DU FAUBOURG SAINT JAUMES
BD. HENRI IV
Tour des Pins
RUE DE LA PROVIDENCE
RUE DE L'UNIVERSITE
PLACE CHAPELLE -NEUVE
CORUM
Faculté de Médecine
Cathédrale de St-Pierre
Notre-Dame des Tables
RUE DU CARRE DU ROI
RUE PITOT
BD. VALLETON
PLACE DE LA CANOURGUE
Hôtel de Mirman
BD. BONNE NOUVELLE
ESPLANADE CHARLES DE GAULLE
Jardin du Champ de Mars
Château d'Eau
Promenade de Peyrou
Arc de Triomphe
Préfecture
PL. DU MARCHE AUX FLEURS
Musée Fabre
RUE FOCH
PLACE PIERRE FLOTTE
RUE CLAPIES
PL. GIRAL
PL. DES MART. DE LA RESISTANCE
RUE DE L'AIGUILLERIE
R. DE LA MONNAIE
Hôtel de Manse
BD. SARRAIL
BD. LEDRU ROLLIN
RUE DE LA VELFERE
Hôtel des Trésories de la Bourse
RUE DE LA LOGE
AV F MISTRAL
RUE DU MERCI
RUE MONTCALM
RUE ST-GUILHEM
L'ANCIEN COURRIER
RUE DE
Musée Languedocien
St-Roch
PL. ST-ROCH
PL. ST-COME
PL. DE LA COMEDIE
RUE FBG. DU CORREAU
RUE ROUCHER
GD RUE JEAN MOULIN
RUE DESÉTUVES
Opéra
RUE MAGUELONE
RUE DE VERDUN
BD. DU JEU DE PAUME
Tour de la Babote
BD. VICTOR HUGO
Aéroport 8 km (5 miles)
Halles Laissac
Gare SNCF
BÉZIERS
RUE DE LA REPUBLIQUE
PLACE A. GILBERT
Gare Routière

Open-air café in the place de la Comédie, Montpellier

Montpellier ㉒

Hérault. 👥 *250,000.* ✈ 🚆 🚌 ℹ *30 allée Jean de Lattré de Tassigny (04 67 60 60 60).* ⛺ *daily.* 🎭 *Festival International Montpellier Danse (Jun–Jul).* **www**.ot-montpellier.fr

Montpellier is one of the liveliest, most forward-looking cities in the south, with a quarter of its population under 25. Sometimes on a summer evening during university term time it resembles more a rock festival than the capital of Languedoc-Roussillon.

Center of the action is the egg-shaped **place de la Comédie**, known as "l'Oeuf" ("the egg"), with its 19th-century opera house fronted by the Fontaine des Trois Graces and surrounded by buzzing cafés. An esplanade of plane trees and fountains leads to the **CORUM**, an opera and conference center typical of the city's brave new architectural projects. The best of these is Ricardo Bofill's Postmodern housing complex known as Antigone, which is modeled on St. Peter's in Rome.

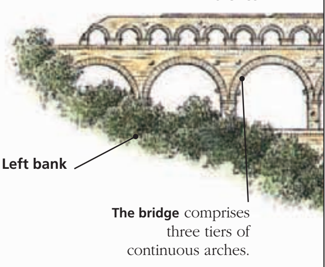
Montpellier was founded relatively late for this region of ancient Roman towns, developing in the 10th century as a result of the spice trade with the Middle East. The city's medical school was founded in 1220, partly as a result of this cross-fertilization of knowledge between the two cultures, and remains one of the most respected in France.

Most of Montpellier was ravaged by the Wars of Religion in the 16th century. Only the **Tour de la Babote** and the **Tours des Pins** remain of the 12th-century fortifications. There are few fine churches, the exceptions being the **Cathédrale de St-Pierre** and the 18th-century **Notre-Dame des Tables**.

Reconstruction in the 17th century saw the building of mansions with elegant courtyards, stone staircases, and balconies. Examples open to the public include **Hôtel de Manse** on rue Embouque-d'Or, **Hôtel de Mirman** near place des Martyrs de la Resistance and **Hôtel des Trésoriers de la Bourse**. The Hôtel des Lunaret houses the **Musée Languedocien** which exhibits Romanesque and prehistoric artifacts.

Another 17th-century building houses the renovated **Musée Fabre** with a collection of mainly French paintings.

PONT DU GARD


← To Uzès
Left bank

The bridge comprises three tiers of continuous arches.

Highlights include Courbet's famous *Bonjour M. Courbet*, Berthe Morisot's *L'Eté*, and some evocative paintings of the region by Raoul Dufy.

A good place to view the city's position between mountains and sea is from the **Promenade de Peyrou**, a grand 18th-century square dominated by the **Château d'Eau** and the aqueduct which used to serve the city. North of here is the **Jardin des Plantes**, France's oldest botanical gardens (1593). Not to be missed is **Mare Nostrum**, the new aquarium in the Odysseum leisure zone, which has over 300 marine species.

🏛 **Musée Languedocien**
7 rue Jacques Coeur. ***Tel*** *04 67 52 93 03.* ○ *Mon–Sat: pm only.* ● *public hols.* ♿

🏛 **Musée Fabre**
39 bd Bonne Nouvelle. ***Tel*** *04 67 14 83 00.* ○ *Tue–Sun.* ♿ 🛍 🍴 🎧

Château d'Eau, Montpellier

La Grande-Motte ㉓

Hérault. 👥 *6,600.* 🚌 ℹ *pl du 1er Octobre (04 67 56 42 00).* 🛒 *Sun (& Thu: mid-Jun–mid-Sep).*

The bizarre white ziggurats of this modern marina exemplify the development of the Languedoc-Roussillon coast. One of a number of new cities on the lagoons south of Montpellier, there are marinas and facilities for every kind of sport from tennis and golf to watersports, all flanked by golden beaches and pine forests. To the east are Le Grau-du-Roi, once a tiny fishing village, and Port-Camargue, with its big marina.

La Grande-Motte

Aigues-Mortes ㉔

Gard. 👥 *6,200.* 🚆 🚌 ℹ *pl St Louis (04 66 53 73 00).* 🛒 *Wed & Sun.* **www**.ot-aiguesmortes.fr

The best approach to this perfectly preserved walled town is across the salt marshes of the Petite Camargue. Now marooned 3 miles (5 km) from the sea, the imposing defenses of this once important port have become a tourist experience, worth visiting more for the effect of the ensemble than the tacky stores within. Aigues-Mortes ("Place of Dead Waters") was established by Louis XI in the 13th century to consolidate his power on the Mediterranean, and built according to a strict grid pattern. By climbing up the **Tour de Constance** you can walk out onto the rectangular walls, which afford a superb view over the Camargue.

Environs
To the northeast is **St-Gilles-du-Gard**, also once an important medieval port. Today it is worth a detour to see the superbly sculpted 12th-century façade of its abbey church. This was originally established by the monks of Cluny abbey as a shrine to St-Gilles, and a resting place on the famous pilgrimage route to Santiago de Compostela *(see pp400–1).*

Nîmes ㉕

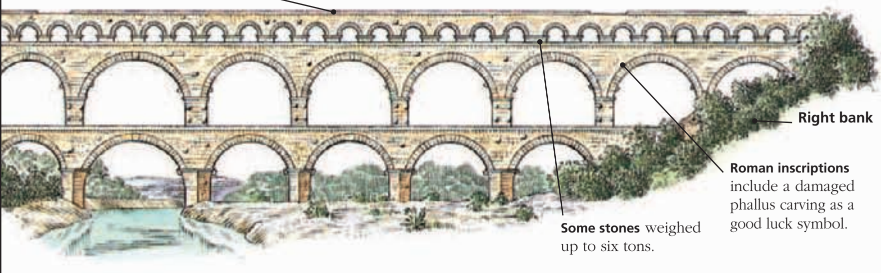
See pp496-7.

Pont du Gard ㉖

Gard. ℹ *08 20 90 33 30.* 🚌 *from Nîmes.* **www**.pontdugard.fr

No amount of fame can diminish the first sight of the 2,000-year-old Pont du Gard. The Romans considered it the best testimony to the greatness of their Empire, and at 160 ft (49 m) it was the highest bridge they ever built.

It is made from blocks of stone, hauled into place by slaves using an ingenious system of pulleys. The huge build-up of calcium in the water channels suggests the aqueduct was in continuous use for 400–500 years, carrying water to Nîmes along a 31-mile (50-km) route from the springs at **Uzès**. This charming town has an arcaded marketplace and several fine medieval towers.



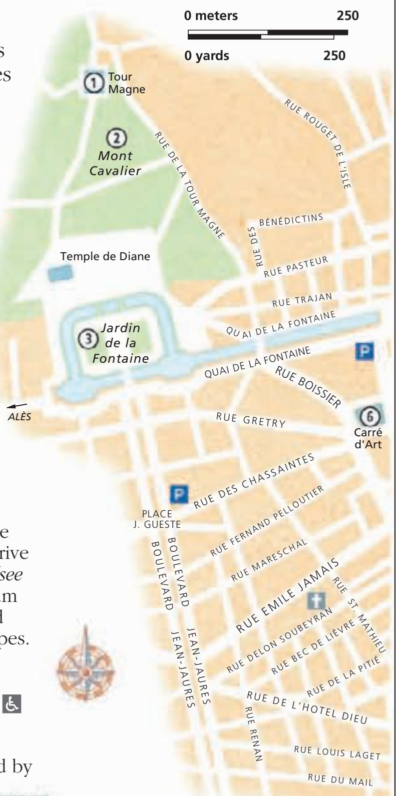
Roman inscriptions include a damaged phallus carving as a good luck symbol.

Some stones weighed up to six tons.

Nîmes ㉕

Listed number one on the tourist map of Nîmes is the bus stop designed by Philippe Starck, who is also credited with reworking the city's pedestrian zone. Such innovations are part of the city's current design renaissance. Architectural projects range from imaginative housing to a glittering new arts complex, under the guidance of a dynamic mayor. An important crossroads in the ancient world, Nîmes is equally well known for its Roman antiquities such as the amphitheater, the best preserved of its kind. The city is also famous for its festivals and bullfights (*feria*). These are good times to see the rest of Nîmes with its museums, archeological collections and Old Town of narrow streets and intimate squares.

Arches of the Roman amphitheater



0 meters 250
0 yards 250
① Tour Magne
② Mont Cavalier
Rue de la Tour Magne
Rue Rouget de l'Isle
Bénédictins
Rue des
Temple de Diane
Rue Pasteur
Rue Trajan
Quai de la Fontaine
③ Jardin de la Fontaine
Quai de la Fontaine
Rue Boissier
P
⑥ Carré d'Art
Alès
Rue Gretry
Rue des Chassaintes
P
Place J. Gueste
Rue Fernand Pelloutier
Boulevard Jean-Jaures
Boulevard Jean-Jaures
Rue Mareschal
Rue Emile Jamais
Rue St. Mathieu
Rue Delon Soubeyran
Rue Bec de Lievre
Rue de la Pitie
Rue de l'Hotel Dieu
Rue Renan
Rue Louis Laget
Rue du Mail

Historic Nîmes

Nîmes has had a turbulent history, suffering particularly during the 16th-century Wars of Religion when the Romanesque **Cathédrale Notre-Dame et St-Castor** was badly damaged. During the 17th and 18th centuries the town prospered from textile manufacturing, one of the most enduring products being denim or "de Nîmes." Many of the fine houses of this period have been restored and elegant examples can be seen on rue de l'Aspic, rue des Marchands and rue du Chapitre in the Old Town. Just outside the town center is the futuristic apartment building, **Nemausus I**.

The Roman gate, the **Porte Auguste**, built 20 years before the temple of **Maison Carrée**, was once part of one of the longest city walls in Gaul. Of the original arches still standing, two (large) were for carts and chariots and two (smaller) ones for pedestrians. The other major Roman remnant is the **Castellum**, where water used to arrive from the Pont du Gard *(see p495)*. From the Castellum it was distributed around the city through thick pipes.

Jug from Musée Archéologique

Jardin de la Fontaine

Quai de la Fontaine. ○ *daily.* ♿

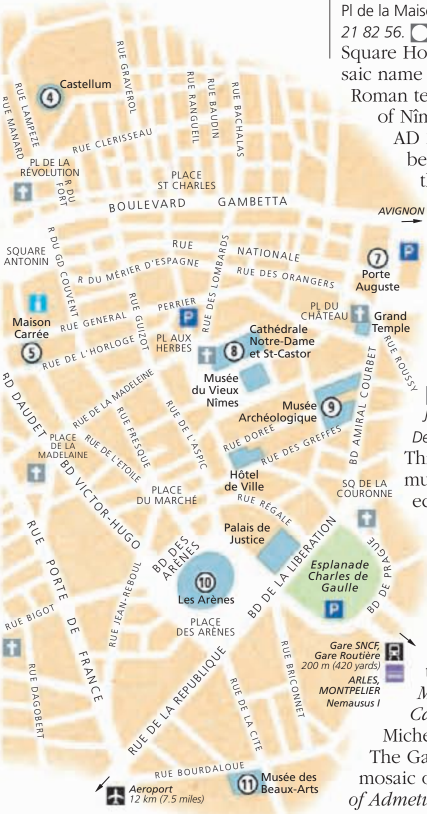
When the Romans arrived in Nîmes, they found a town established by

Jardin de la Fontaine, with a view over the city

SIGHTS AT A GLANCE

- Carré d'Art/Musée d'Art Contemporain ⑥
- Castellum ④
- Cathédrale Notre-Dame et St-Castor ⑧
- Jardin de la Fontaine ③
- Les Arènes ⑩
- Maison Carrée ⑤
- Mont Cavalier ②
- Musée Archéologique ⑨
- Musée des Beaux Arts ⑪
- Porte Auguste ⑦
- Tour Magne ①

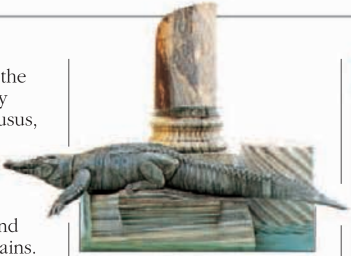
the Gauls, centered on the source of a spring. They named the town Nemausus, after their river god. In the 18th century, formal gardens were constructed, and a network of limpid pools and cool stone terraces remains. High above the garden on **Mont Cavalier** is the octagonal **Tour Magne**, once a key part of the Roman walls, offering a great view of the city.


Castellum
④
RUE LAMPEZE
RUE MANARD
RUE GRAVEROL
RUE RANGUEIL
RUE BAUDIN
RUE BACHALAS
RUE CLERISSEAU
PL DE LA RÉVOLUTION
R DU FORT
PLACE ST CHARLES
BOULEVARD
GAMBETTA
AVIGNON
SQUARE ANTONIN
R DU GD COUVENT
RUE
NATIONALE
R DU MÉRIER D'ESPAGNE
RUE DES LOMBARDS
RUE DES ORANGERS
⑦
Porte Auguste
Maison Carrée
⑤
RUE GENERAL
PERRIER
RUE GUIZOT
PL DU CHÂTEAU
Grand Temple
RUE ROUSSY
RUE DE L'HORLOGE
PL AUX HERBES
⑧
Cathédrale Notre-Dame et St-Castor
Musée du Vieux Nîmes
Musée Archéologique
⑨
BD AMIRAL COURBET
BD DAUDET
RUE DE LA MADELEINE
RUE FRESQUE
RUE DE L'ASPIC
PLACE DE LA MADELEINE
RUE DE L'ETOILE
RUE DOREE
RUE DES GREFFES
BD VICTOR-HUGO
Hôtel de Ville
SQ DE LA COURONNE
PLACE DU MARCHÉ
RUE RÉGALE
Palais de Justice
RUE PORTE DE FRANCE
BD DES ARÈNES
BD DE LA LIBERATION
Esplanade Charles de Gaulle
BD DE PRAGUE
⑩
Les Arènes
RUE BIGOT
RUE JEAN-REBOUL
PLACE DES ARÈNES
Gare SNCF, Gare Routière
200 m (420 yards)
ARLES, MONTPELLIER
Nemausus I
RUE DAGOBERT
RUE DE LA REPUBLIQUE
RUE DE LA CITE
RUE BRICONNET
RUE BOURDALOUE
⑪
Musée des Beaux-Arts
Aeroport
12 km (7.5 miles)

Les Arènes

Bd des Arènes. ***Tel*** *04 66 21 82 56.* ○ *daily.* ● *performance days.* ♿

All roads lead to the amphitheater, Les Arènes. Built at the end of the 1st century AD, the design of the oval arena and tiers of stone seats accommodated huge crowds of up to 20,000 spectators. Today it is in use again, a perfect venue for concerts, sporting events, and bullfights.



Arms of the city in a sculpture by Martial Raysse

Maison Carrée

Pl de la Maison Carrée. ***Tel*** *04 66 21 82 56.* ○ *daily.*

Square House is a very prosaic name for this elegant Roman temple, the pride of Nîmes. Built around AD 2, it is one of the best preserved in the world, with finely fluted Corinthian columns and a sculpted frieze.

Musée des Beaux Arts

Rue Cité Foulc. ***Tel*** *04 66 67 38 21.* ○ *Tue–Sun.* ● *Jan 1, May 1, Nov 1, Dec 25.* ♿

This fine arts museum houses an eclectic collection of Dutch, French, Italian and Flemish works, notably Jacopo Bassano's *Susanna and the Elders*, and the *Mystic Marriage of St. Catherine* by Michele Giambono. The Gallo-Roman mosaic of *The Marriage of Admetus*, discovered in 1882, is on the main floor.

Musée Archéologique

Musée d'Histoire Naturelle, 13 bis bd Amiral Courbet. ***Tel*** *04 66 76 73 45.* ○ *Tue–Sun.* ● *Jan 1, May 1, Nov 1, Dec 25.*

The museum's collection of Roman statues, ceramics, glass, coins, and mosaics is housed in Nîmes' natural history museum. The exhibits include important Iron Age menhir statues.

VISITORS' CHECKLIST

Gard. 👥 *137,000.* ✈ *7.5 miles (12 km) SSE Nîmes.* 🚆 *bd Talabot (SNCF: 36 35).* 🚌 *Rue St Félicité (04 66 38 59 43).* ℹ *6 rue Auguste (04 66 58 38 00).* *daily.* *Ferias: de Pentecôte (Pentecost), des Vendanges (Sep).* **www**.ot-nimes.fr

The Maison Carrée

Carré d'Art/ Musée d'Art Contemporain

Pl de la Maison Carrée. ***Tel*** *04 66 76 35 35.* ○ *Tue–Sun.* ● *Jan 1, May 1, Nov 1, Dec 25.* ♿

Nîmes' arts complex, by the British architect Sir Norman Foster, opened in 1993. Five floors of this glass and steel temple, which was built in tribute to the Maison Carrée opposite, lie underground. The complex has a library, a roof-terrace restaurant around a huge glass atrium, and the Musée d'Art Contemporain. Works cover the main European art movements from the 1960s onward, and include works by Raysse, Boltanski, and Lavier for France.

Bullfight at Les Arènes in Nîmes

PROVENCE AND THE COTE D'AZUR

BOUCHES-DU-RHÔNE · VAUCLUSE · VAR
ALPES-DE-HAUTE-PROVENCE · ALPES-MARITIMES

From its herb-scented hills to its yacht-filled harbors, no other region of France fires the imagination as strongly as Provence. The vivid landscape and luminous light have inspired artists and writers from Van Gogh to Picasso, F. Scott Fitzgerald to Pagnol.

The borders of Provence are defined by nature: to the west, the Rhône; south, the Mediterranean; and north, where the olive trees end. To the east are the Alps and a border which has shifted over the centuries between France and Italy. Within is a contrasting terrain of plummeting gorges, Camargue saltflats, lavender fields, and sun-drenched beaches.

Past visitors have left their mark. In Orange and Arles, the buildings of Roman *Provincia* are still in use. Fortified villages like Èze were built to withstand the Saracen pirates who plagued the coast in the 6th century.

In the 19th century, rich Europeans sought winter warmth on the Riviera; by the 1920s, high society was in residence all year, and their elegant villas remain. The warm sunlight nurtures intense flavors and colors. Peppers, garlic, and olives transform a netful of Mediterranean fish into that vibrant epitome of Provençal cuisine, *bouillabaisse*.

The image of Provence bathed in sunshine is marred only when the bitter Mistral wind scours the land. It has shaped a people as hardy as the olive tree, yet quick to embrace life to the full the moment the sun returns.

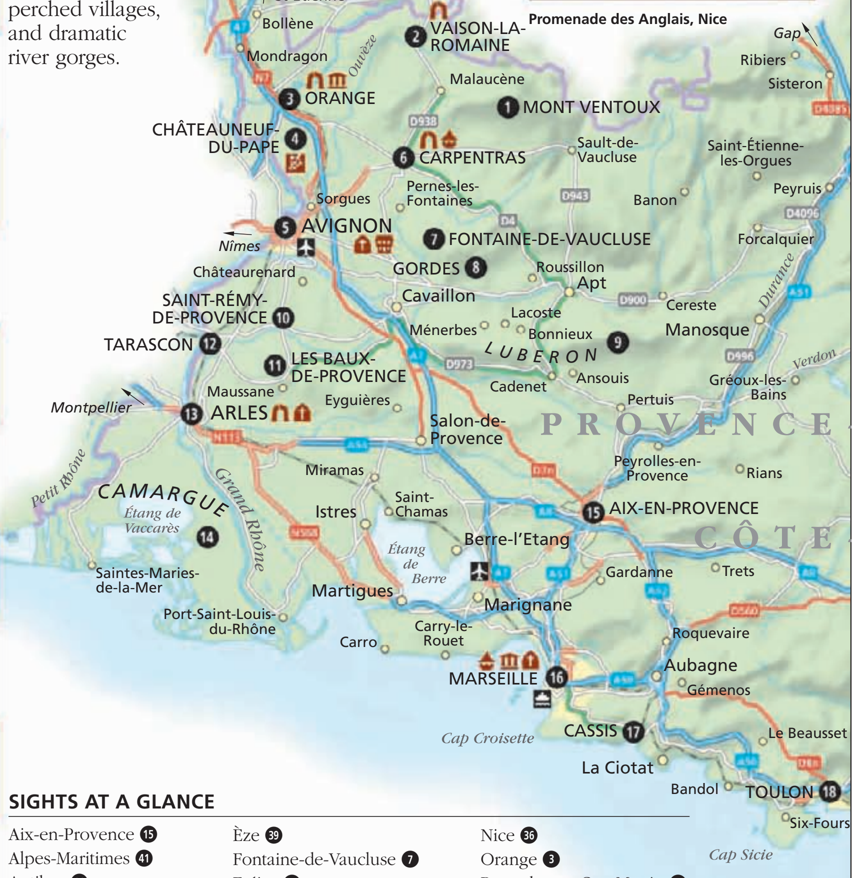
Cap Martin, seen from the village of Roquebrune

◁ **Lavender fields near the Gorges du Verdon**

Exploring Provence

This sun-drenched southeastern region is France's most popular vacation destination. Sunworshippers cram the beaches in the summer months, and entertainment includes opera, dance, and jazz festivals, bullfights, casinos, and *boules* games. Inland is a paradise for walkers and nature lovers, with remote mountain plateaus, perched villages, and dramatic river gorges.

Promenade des Anglais, Nice


Valence, St-Étienne
Bollène
Mondragon
Ouvèze
② VAISON-LA-ROMAINE
Gap
Ribiers
Sisteron
③ ORANGE
Malaucène
① MONT VENTOUX
CHÂTEAUNEUF-DU-PAPE ④
⑥ CARPENTRAS
Sault-de-Vaucluse
Saint-Étienne-les-Orgues
Pernes-les-Fontaines
Sorgues
Banon
Peyruis
⑤ AVIGNON
Nîmes
⑦ FONTAINE-DE-VAUCLUSE
Forcalquier
GORDES ⑧
Châteaurenard
Roussillon
Apt
Durance
SAINT-RÉMY-DE-PROVENCE ⑩
Cavaillon
Cereste
Lacoste
Ménerbes
Bonnieux
⑨
Manosque
TARASCON ⑫
LUBERON
⑪ LES BAUX-DE-PROVENCE
Verdon
Ansouis
Gréoux-les-Bains
Maussane
Cadenet
Pertuis
Montpellier
Eyguières
⑬ ARLES
Salon-de-Provence
PROVENCE
Petit Rhône
Grand Rhône
Miramas
Peyrolles-en-Provence
Rians
CAMARGUE
Étang de Vaccarès
⑭
Istres
Saint-Chamas
⑮ AIX-EN-PROVENCE
CÔTE
Berre-l'Etang
Étang de Berre
Saintes-Maries-de-la-Mer
Gardanne
Trets
Martigues
Marignane
Port-Saint-Louis-du-Rhône
Carry-le-Rouet
Roquevaire
Carro
MARSEILLE ⑯
Aubagne
Gémenos
Cap Croisette
CASSIS ⑰
Le Beausset
La Ciotat
Bandol
TOULON ⑱
Six-Fours
Cap Sicie
A7
N7
D938
D943
D4
D900
D973
A51
D4085
D4096
D996
N113
A54
D7n
N568
A8
A52
D560
A50
D8n

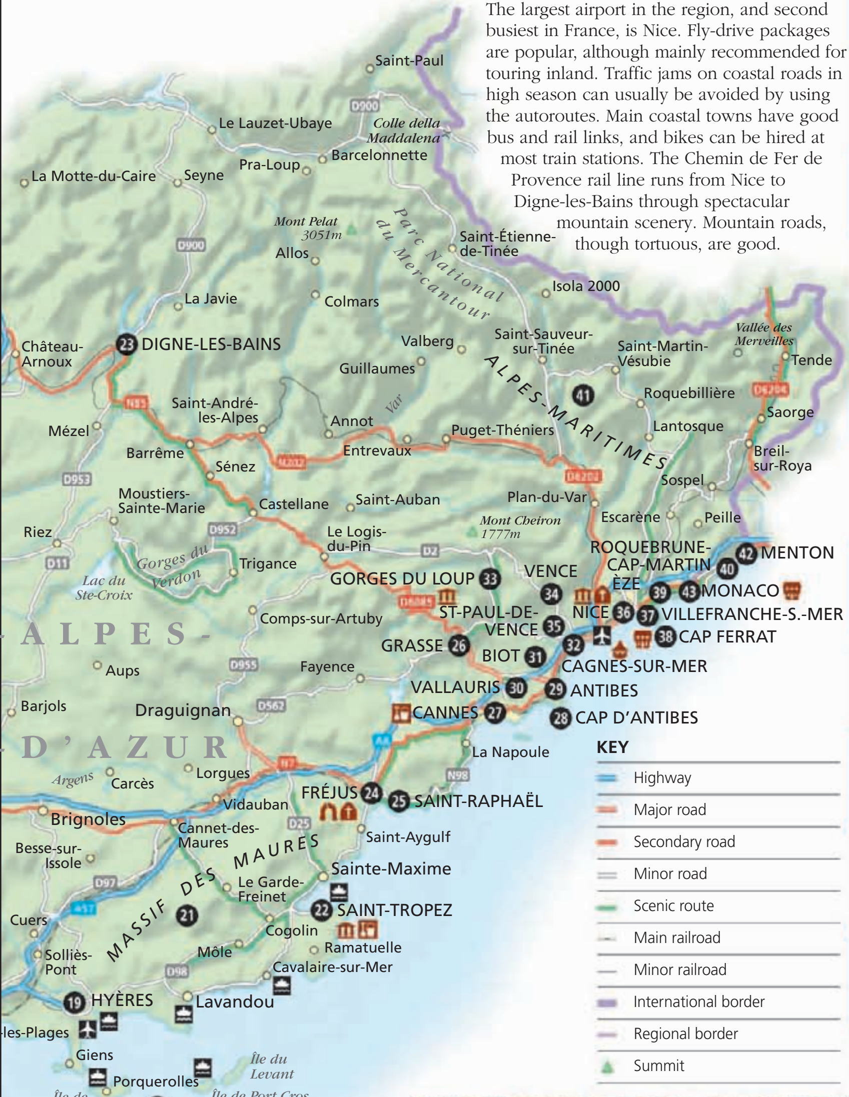
SIGHTS AT A GLANCE

- Aix-en-Provence ⑮
- Alpes-Maritimes ㊶
- Antibes ㉙
- Arles ⑬
- Avignon ⑤
- Biot ㉛
- Cagnes-sur-Mer ㉜
- The Camargue ⑭
- Cannes ㉗
- Cap d'Antibes ㉘
- Cap Ferrat ㊳
- Carpentras ⑥
- Cassis ⑰
- Châteauneuf-du-Pape ④
- Digne-les-Bains ㉓
- Èze ㊴
- Fontaine-de-Vaucluse ⑦
- Fréjus ㉔
- Gordes ⑧
- Gorges du Loup ㉝
- Grasse ㉖
- Hyères ⑲
- Îles d'Hyères ⑳
- Les Baux-de-Provence ⑪
- Luberon ⑨
- Marseille ⑯
- Massif des Maures ㉑
- Menton ㊷
- Monaco ㊸
- Mont Ventoux ①
- Nice ㊱
- Orange ③
- Roquebrune-Cap-Martin ㊵
- St-Paul-de-Vence ㉟
- St-Raphaël ㉕
- St-Rémy-de-Provence ⑩
- St-Tropez ㉒
- Tarascon ⑫
- Toulon ⑱
- Vaison-la-Romaine ②
- Vallauris ㉚
- Vence ㉞
- Villefranche-sur-Mer ㊲

For additional map symbols *see back flap*

GETTING AROUND

The largest airport in the region, and second busiest in France, is Nice. Fly-drive packages are popular, although mainly recommended for touring inland. Traffic jams on coastal roads in high season can usually be avoided by using the autoroutes. Main coastal towns have good bus and rail links, and bikes can be hired at most train stations. The Chemin de Fer de Provence rail line runs from Nice to Digne-les-Bains through spectacular mountain scenery. Mountain roads, though tortuous, are good.


Saint-Paul
D900
Le Lauzet-Ubaye
Colle della Maddalena
Barcelonnette
Pra-Loup
La Motte-du-Caire
Seyne
Mont Pelat 3051m
Parc National du Mercantour
Saint-Étienne-de-Tinée
D900
Allos
Colmars
La Javie
Isola 2000
Château-Arnoux
23 DIGNE-LES-BAINS
Valberg
Saint-Sauveur-sur-Tinée
Saint-Martin-Vésubie
Vallée des Merveilles
Tende
Guillaumes
ALPES-MARITIMES
41
Roquebillière
D6204
N85
Saint-André-les-Alpes
Var
Annot
Saorge
Mézel
Puget-Théniers
Lantosque
Barrême
Entrevaux
Breil-sur-Roya
Sénez
M202
D953
D6202
Sospel
Moustiers-Sainte-Marie
Castellane
Saint-Auban
Plan-du-Var
Riez
D952
Le Logis-du-Pin
Mont Cheiron 1777m
Escarène
Peille
D11
Gorges du Verdon
Trigance
D2
ROQUEBRUNE-CAP-MARTIN 40
42 MENTON
Lac du Ste-Croix
GORGES DU LOUP 33
VENCE 34
ÈZE
39 43 MONACO
D6085
ST-PAUL-DE-VENCE 35
NICE 36
37 VILLEFRANCHE-S.-MER
Comps-sur-Artuby
38 CAP FERRAT
ALPES-
GRASSE 26
BIOT 31
32
CAGNES-SUR-MER
Aups
D955
Fayence
VALLAURIS 30
29 ANTIBES
Barjols
Draguignan
D562
CANNES 27
28 CAP D'ANTIBES
D'AZUR
A8
La Napoule
Argens
Carcès
Lorgues
N7
N98
Vidauban
FRÉJUS 24
25 SAINT-RAPHAËL
Brignoles
Cannet-des-Maures
D25
Saint-Aygulf
Besse-sur-Issole
MASSIF DES MAURES
Sainte-Maxime
D97
Le Garde-Freinet
22 SAINT-TROPEZ
Cuers
A57
21
Cogolin
Ramatuelle
Solliès-Pont
Môle
Cavalaire-sur-Mer
D98
19 HYÈRES
Lavandou
-les-Plages
Giens
Île du Levant
Porquerolles
Île de Porquerolles
20
Île de Port Cros
ÎLES D'HYÈRES
KEY
Highway
Major road
Secondary road
Minor road
Scenic route
Main railroad
Minor railroad
International border
Regional border
Summit
0 kilometers 25
0 miles 25

Spectacular scenery near the quiet market town of Forcalquier

Mont Ventoux ①

Vaucluse. ✈ *Avignon.* 🚆 *Avignon.* 🚌 *Carpentras.* ℹ *Av de la Prom Saulten Provence (04 90 64 01 21).*

The name means "Windy Mountain" in Provençal. A variety of flora and fauna may be found on the lower slopes but only moss survives at the peak, where the temperature can drop to –17° F (–27°C). The bare white scree at the summit makes it look snow-capped even during summer.

Ventoux is the mountain on which the legendary British bicyclist Tommy Simpson died during 1967's Tour de France. Today, a road leads to the radio beacon pinnacle, but the trip should not be attempted in bad weather. At other times, spectacular views from the top make the effort worthwhile.

Roman mosaic from the Villa du Paon in Vaison-la-Romaine

Vaison-la-Romaine ②

Vaucluse. 👥 *6,100.* 🚌 ℹ *pl du Chanoine Sautel (04 90 36 02 11).* 🛒 *Tue.* **www**.vaison-en-provence.com

This site has been settled since the Bronze Age, but its name stems from five centuries as a Roman town.

Although the upper town, dominated by the ruins of a 12th-century castle, has some charming narrow streets, stone houses, and fountains, Vaison's main attractions lie on the opposite side of the river.

The **Roman City** is split into two districts: Puymin and La Villasse. At Puymin, an opulent mansion, the Villa du Paon, and a Roman theater have been uncovered.

In 1992, the river Ouvèze burst its banks, taking many lives in Vaison and the nearby area. Damage to some ruins, such as the Roman bridge, has since been repaired. Also at Vaison is the fine Romanesque **Cathédrale Notre-Dame-de-Nazareth**, with medieval cloisters.

Roman City

Fouilles de Puymin & Musée Théo Desplans, pl du Chanoine Sautel. ***Tel*** *04 90 36 0211.* ○ *daily.* ● *Jan–mid-Feb.* 🚫📷 🚫⚡ ♿ *restr.* 🛍

Orange ③

Vaucluse. 👥 *30,000.* 🚆 🚌 ℹ *5 cours Aristide Briand (04 90 34 70 88).* 🛒 *Thu.* **www**.otorange.fr

Orange is a thriving regional center. The fields, orchards, and great vineyards of the Rhône Valley make it an important marketplace for produce such as grapes, olives, honey, and truffles. Visitors should explore the area around the 17th-century Hôtel de Ville, where attractive streets open onto quiet, shady squares. Orange has two of the greatest Roman monuments in Europe.

Roman Theater

Rue Madeleine-Roch. ***Tel*** *04 90 51 17 60.* ○ *daily.* 🚫📷 🚫⚡ *entrance also valid for Musée d'Orange.* ♿ *restricted.* 🛍 ☕

Dating from the 1st-century AD reign of Augustus, the well-preserved theater has perfect acoustics. It is still used for theater performances and concerts. The back wall rises to a height of 120 ft (36 m) and is 338 ft (103 m) wide. In 2006 an immense glass roof, built high above the theater so as not to affect the acoustics, replaced the original roof which was destroyed in a fire.

Statue of Augustus Caesar in the Roman Theater at Orange

Triumphal Arch

Av de l'Arc de Triomphe.

The triple-arched monument was built about AD 20. It is elaborately decorated with battle scenes, military trophies, and inscriptions to the glory of Tiberius.

Musée d'Orange

Rue Madeleine-Roch. ***Tel*** *04 90 51 17 60.* ○ *daily.* 🚫📷

Relics here reflect the Roman presence in Orange, including 400 marble fragments, the earliest of which dates to Emperor Vespasian's reign in the 1st century BC.

Châteauneuf-du-Pape ④

Vaucluse. 👥 *2,100.* 🚆 *Sorgues, then taxi.* ℹ *pl du Portail (04 90 83 71 08).* 🛒 *Fri.* **www**.paysprovence.fr

Here, in the 14th century, the popes of Avignon chose to build a new castle *(château neuf)* and plant the vineyards from which one of the finest

View across the vineyards of Châteauneuf-du-Pape

wines of the Côtes du Rhône is produced. Now almost every doorway in this attractive little town seems to open into a *vigneron*'s cellar.

After the Wars of Religion *(see pp54–55)*, all that remained of the papal fortress were a few fragments of walls and tower, but the ruins look spectacular and offer magnificent views across to Avignon and the Vaucluse uplands beyond.

Wine festivals punctuate the year, including the Fête de la Véraison in August *(see p38)*, when the grapes start to ripen, and the Ban des Vendages in September, when the grapes are ready to be harvested.

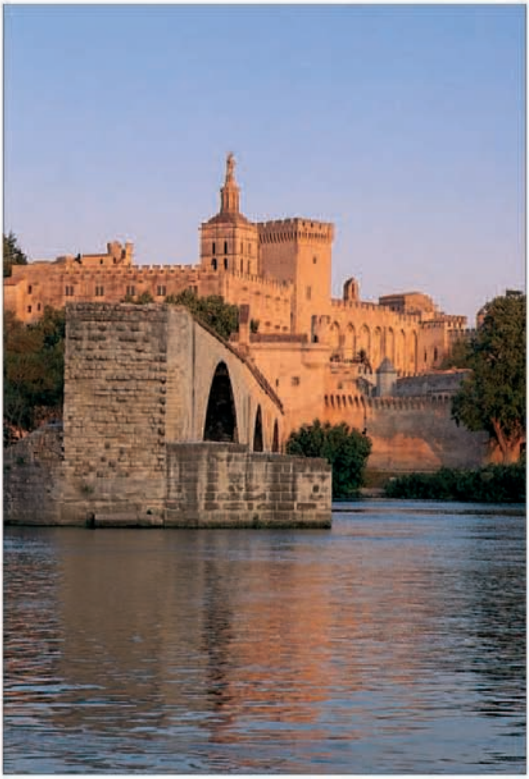
Avignon ❺

Vaucluse. 👥 *90,000.* ✈ 🚆 🚌 ℹ *41 cours Jean Jaurès (04 32 74 32 74).* ⛺ *Tue–Sun.* 🎭 *Festival d'Avignon (3 wks Jul)* **www**.ot-avignon.fr

Massive ramparts enclose one of the most fascinating towns in southern France. The **Palais des Papes** *(see pp504-5)* dominates, but the town contains other riches. To the north of the Palais is the 13th-century **Musée du Petit Palais**, once the Archbishop of Avignon's residence. It has received such guests as Cesare Borgia and Louis XIV. Now a museum, it displays Romanesque and Gothic sculpture and medieval paintings, with works by Botticelli and Carpaccio.

Rue Joseph-Vernet and rue du Roi-René are lined with splendid 17th- and 18th-century houses. There are also fine churches, such as the **Cathédrale de Notre-Dame-des-Doms**, and the 14th-century **Eglise St-Didier**. The **Musée Lapidaire** contains statues, mosaics, and carvings from pre-Roman Provence. The **Musée Calvet** features a superb array of exhibits, such as wrought-iron works and Roman finds. It also gives an overview of French art during the past 500 years, with works by Rodin, Utrillo, and Dufy.

Two major modern and contemporary art collections, the **Musée Angladon** and the **Collection Lambert**, have been added to the city's cultural repertoire. The former has works by Van Gogh, Cézanne, and Modigliani, while the latter features minimalist and conceptual art.


Pont St-Bénézet and the Palais des Papes in Avignon

The place de l'Horloge is the center of Avignon's social life, with sidewalk cafés and a merry-go-round from 1900. One of the prettiest streets is the rue des Teinturiers. Until the 19th century, brightly patterned calico called *indiennes* was printed here – inspiration for today's Provençal patterns. Avignon's renowned 12th-century bridge, the **Pont St-Bénézet**, was largely destroyed by floods in 1668. People danced on an island below the bridge but over the years, as the famous song testifies, *sous* has become *sur*.

Open-air performance at the Avignon Festival

Avignon hosts France's largest festival, which includes ballet, drama, and classical concerts. The "Off" festival features 600 companies from all areas of show business.

🏛 Musée du Petit Palais

Pl du Palais. ***Tel*** *04 90 86 44 58.* ○ *Wed–Mon.* ● *Jan 1, May 1, Dec 25.* 🎫 🛍 🎧 **www**.petit-palais.org

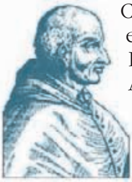
🏛 Musée Lapidaire

27 rue de la République. ***Tel*** *04 90 86 33 84.* ○ *Wed–Mon.* ● *Jan 1, May 1, Dec 25.* 🎫 ♿ *restricted.* 🛍

🏛 Musée Calvet

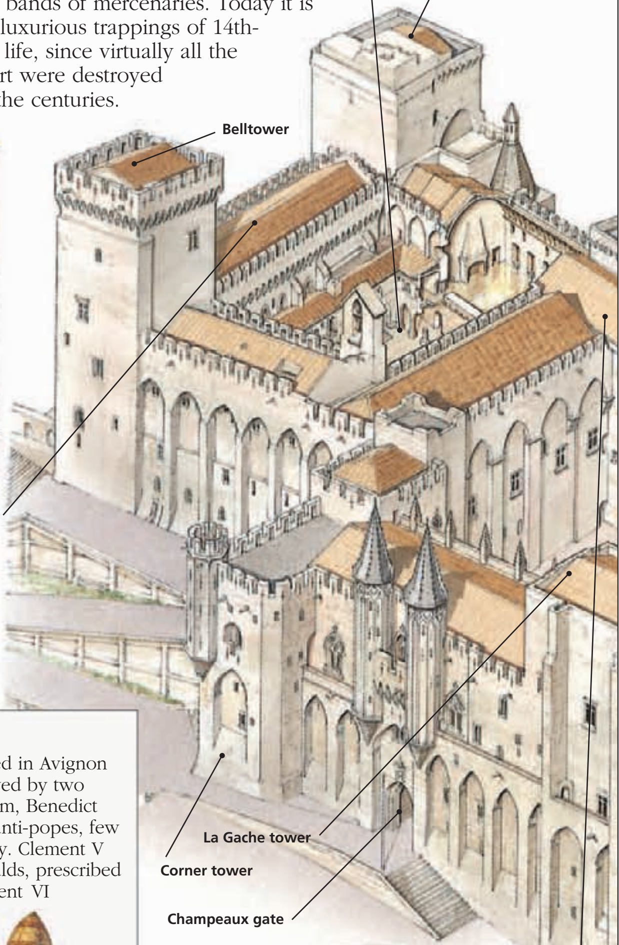
65 rue Joseph Vernet. ***Tel*** *04 90 86 33 84.* ○ *Wed–Mon.* ● *Jan 1, May 1, Dec 25.* 🎫 🛍

Palais des Papes



Pope Clement VI (1342–52)

Confronted with factional strife in Rome and encouraged by the scheming of Philippe IV of France, Pope Clement V moved the papal court to Avignon in 1309. Here it remained until 1377, during which time his successors transformed the modest episcopal building into the present magnificent palace. Its heavy fortification was vital to defend against rogue bands of mercenaries. Today it is empty of the luxurious trappings of 14th-century court life, since virtually all the furnishings and works of art were destroyed or looted in the course of the centuries.

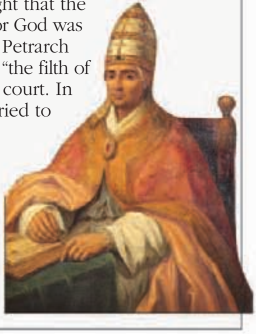


Benedict XII's cloister incorporates the guest and staff wings, and the Benedictine chapel.

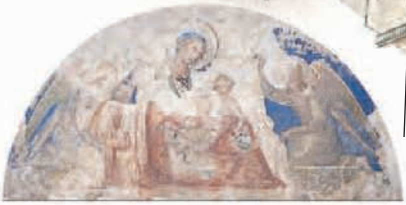
Military Architecture
The palace and its ten towers were designed as an impregnable fortress. It eventually covered an area of 148,000 sq ft (15,000 sq m).

THE AVIGNON POPES

Seven "official" popes reigned in Avignon until 1376. They were followed by two "anti-popes," the last of whom, Benedict XIII, fled in 1403. Popes or anti-popes, few were known for their sanctity. Clement V died eating powdered emeralds, prescribed as an indigestion cure; Clement VI (1342–52) thought that the best way to honor God was through luxury. Petrarch was shocked by "the filth of the universe" at court. In 1367, Urban V tried to return the Curia (papal court) to Rome, a move that became permanent in 1377.



Benedict XII (1334–42)



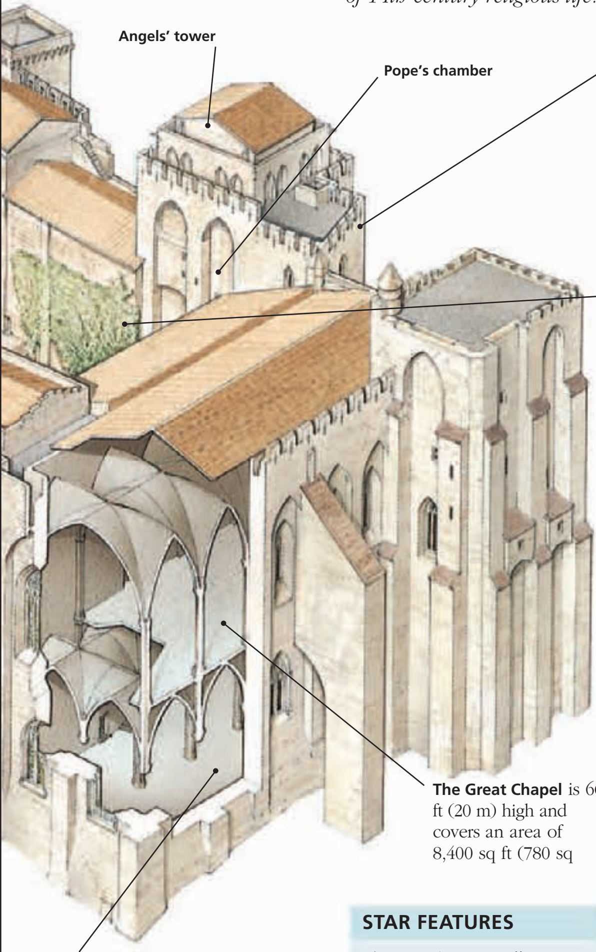
★ Consistory Hall
Simone Martini's frescoes (1340) were taken from the cathedral to replace works destroyed by fire in the papal reception hall in 1413.

Papal Power
More like a warlord's citadel than a papal palace, the building's heavy fortification reflects the insecure climate of 14th-century religious life.

VISITORS' CHECKLIST

Pl du Palais, Avignon.
***Tel** 04 90 27 50 00.*
○ *Nov–mid-Mar: 9.30am–5.45pm; mid-Mar–Oct: 9am–6:30pm (Jul–Sep: 9am–6:30pm). Last adm: 1 hr before closing.*
www.palais-des-papes.com

★ Stag Room
Fourteenth-century hunting frescoes and ceramic tiles adorn Clement VI's study, making it the palace's loveliest room.

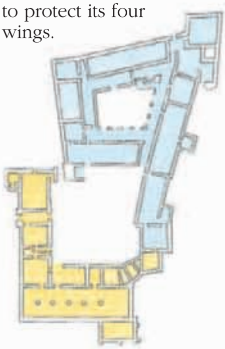


The Great Chapel is 66 ft (20 m) high and covers an area of 8,400 sq ft (780 sq

The Great Audience Hall is divided into two naves by five columns with bestiary sculpture on their capitals.

BUILDING THE PALACE

The palace comprises Pope Benedict XII's simple Palais Vieux (1334–42) and Clement VI's flamboyant Palais Neuf (1342–52). Ten towers, some of which are more than 164 ft (50 m) high, are set in the walls to protect its four wings.



KEY
- 🟦 By Benedict XII (1334–42)
- 🟨 By Clement VI (1342–52)

STAR FEATURES

- ★ Consistory Hall
- ★ Stag Room

Carpentras ❻

Vaucluse. 👥 *29,000.* 🚌 ℹ *Hôtel Dieu, 97 pl du 25 Août 1944 (04 90 63 00 78).* ⛺ *Fri.*

In 1320, Carpentras became capital of the papal county of Venaissin, and remained so until 1791. Modern boulevards trace the former ramparts, with only one original gate, the Porte d'Orange, surviving.

In the Middle Ages the town was home to a large Jewish community; today, that community is small. The 1367 **Synagogue** is the oldest in France. The Sanctuary has been restored.

While not openly persecuted under papal rule, many Jews changed faith, entering **Cathédrale St-Siffrein** by the Porte Juive (Jews' Door).

The Law Courts were built in 1640 as the episcopal palace. The Criminal Court has 17th-century carved tablets of the local towns. In the pharmacy of the Hôtel-Dieu, the 18th-century cupboards are painted with quaint figures of monkey "doctors." More regional art and history is on show at the **Musée Sobirats**.

✡ **Synagogue**
Pl de la Mairie. ***Tel*** *04 90 63 39 97.*
○ *Mon–Fri.* ● *Jewish feast days.*

🏛 **Musée Sobirats**
112 rue du Collège. ***Tel*** *04 90 63 04 92.* ○ *Wed–Mon.* ● *public hols.*

Riverfront and watermill at Fontaine-de-Vaucluse

Fontaine-de-Vaucluse ❼

Vaucluse. 👥 *650.* 🚌 ℹ *chemin du Gouffre (04 90 20 32 22).*

The main attraction here is the source of the river Sorgue. It is the most powerful spring in France, gushing at up to 19,800 gallons per second from an underground river at the foot of a cliff. It powers the Moulin à Papier Vallis Clausa (papermill), which produces handmade paper using the same methods as in the 15th century, and now sells maps, prints, and lampshades. There are also several museums. One is devoted to the poet Petrarch, who lived and wrote here, and another to the French Resistance of World War II.

Perched village of Gordes

Gordes ❽

Vaucluse. 👥 *2,100.* ℹ *pl du Château (04 90 72 02 75).* ⛺ *Tue.*
www.gordes-village.com

Perched villages abound in Provence but Gordes is said to attract the most visitors. Dominated by a 16th-century château, the town forms such a harmonious whole that it might have been designed by an architect. The arcaded medieval lanes add to the attractive hilltop position.

Just south lies the **Village des Bories**, a bizarre, primitive habitat. Bories are tiny beehive-shaped huts built of overlapping dry stones. The construction techniques are thought to date back to Neolithic times. This group was inhabited from the 16th to the early 20th century.

The **Abbaye de Sénanque**, to the north, is a fine Romanesque Cistercian monastery.

Château de Gordes
Tel *04 90 72 02 75.* ○ *daily.*
● *Jan 1, Dec 25.*

Village des Bories
Rte de Gorde. ***Tel*** *04 90 72 03 48.*
○ *daily.* ● *Jan 1, Dec 25, 31.*
www.gordes-village-des-bories.com

Luberon ❾

Vaucluse. ✈ *Avignon.* 🚆 *Cavaillon, Avignon.* 🚌 *Apt.* ℹ *Cavaillon (04 90 71 32 01).* **www**.cavaillon-luberon.fr

A huge limestone range, the Montagne du Luberon is one of the most appealing areas of Provence. Rising to 3,690 ft (1,125 m), it combines wild areas with picturesque villages. Almost the entire area is designated a regional nature park. Within it are more than 1,000 plant species and cedar and oak forests. The wildlife is varied, with eagles, vultures, snakes, beavers, wild boar, and the largest European lizards. The park headquarters are in **Apt**, the capital of the Luberon.

Once notorious as the haunt of highwaymen, the Luberon hills now hide sumptuous vacation homes. The major village is **Bonnieux**, with its 12th-century church and 13th-century walls. Also popular are **Roussillon**, with red ocher buildings, **Lacoste**, the site of the ruins of the Marquis de Sade's castle, and **Ansouis**, with its 14th-century Eglise St-Martin and 17th-century castle. **Ménerbes** drew to it the writer Peter Mayle, whose tales of life here brought this quiet region a worldwide audience.

Herb stall at St-Rémy-de-Provence

St-Rémy-de-Provence ⑩

Bouches-du-Rhône. *10,700.* 🚌 ℹ *pl Jean Jaurès (04 90 92 05 22).* *Wed, Sat.* **www**.saintremy-de-provence.com

For centuries St-Rémy, with its boulevards, fountains, and narrow streets, had two claims to fame. One was that Vincent Van Gogh spent a year here, in 1889–90, at the St-Paul-de-Mausole hospital. *Wheat Field with Cypress* and *Ravine* are among the 150 works he produced here. St-Rémy-de-Provence was also the birthplace in 1503 of Nostradamus, known for his prophecies. But, in 1921, St-Rémy found new fame when archeologists unearthed the fascinating Roman ruins at **Glanum**. Little remains of the ancient city, sacked in AD 480 by the Goths, but the site impresses. Around the ruins of a Roman arch are foundations and a vast mausoleum, decorated with scenes such as the death of Adonis.

Glanum
Tel *04 90 92 23 79.* ○ *Apr–Aug: daily; Sep–Mar: Tue–Sun.* ● *Jan 1, May 1, Nov 1 & 11, Dec 25.* ♿

Les Baux-de-Provence ⑪

Bouches-du-Rhône. *460.* 🚌 *Arles.* ℹ *La Maison du Roy (04 90 54 34 39).* **www**.lesbauxdeprovence.com

One of the strangest places in Provence, the deserted citadel of Les Baux stands like a natural extension of a huge rocky plateau. The ruined castle and old houses overlook the Val d'Enfer (Infernal Valley), with its weird rocks.

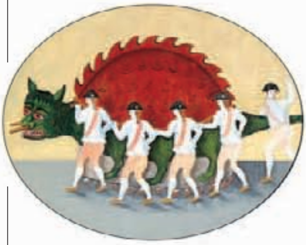
In the Middle Ages Les Baux was home to powerful feudal lords, who claimed descent from the Magus Balthazar. It was the most famous of the Provençal Cours d'Amour, at which troubadours sang the praises of high-born ladies. The ideal of everlasting but unrequited courtly love contrasts with the war-like nature of the citadel's lords.

The glory of Les Baux ended in 1632. It had become a Protestant stronghold and Louis XIII ordered its destruction. The ruins of **Châteaux de Baux de Provence** are a reminder of a turbulent past and offer spectacular views. The living village below has a pleasant little square, the 12th-century **Eglise St-Vincent** and the **Chapelle des Pénitents Blancs**, decorated by local artist Yves Brayer, whose work can be seen in the **Musée Yves Brayer**.

Deserted medieval citadel of Les Baux-de-Provence

In 1821 bauxite was discovered (and named) here. The disused quarries now form the backdrop for spectacular audio-visual displays, known as the **Cathédrale d'Images**.

To the southwest are the ruins of the **Abbaye de Montmajour** with its 12th-century Romanesque church.



Parading the Tarasque, 1850

Tarascon ⑫

Bouches-du-Rhône. *14,000.* 🚆 🚌 ℹ *les Panaromiques, Pl du Château (04 90 91 03 52).* *Tue & Fri.* **www**.tarascon.org

According to legend, the town takes its name from the Tarasque, a monster, half-animal and half-fish, which terrorized the countryside. It was tamed by Sainte Marthe, who is buried in the church here. An effigy of the Tarasque is still paraded through the streets each June *(see p37)*.

The striking 15th-century **Château du Roi René** on the banks of the Rhône is one of the finest examples of Gothic military architecture in Provence. Its somber exterior gives no hint of the beauties within: the Flemish-Gothic courtyard, the spiral staircase, and painted ceilings of the banqueting hall.

Opposite is Beaucaire, a ruined castle and gardens.

Château du Roi René
Bd du Roi René. ***Tel*** *04 90 91 01 93.* ○ *Apr–Aug: daily; Sep–Mar: Tue – Sun.* ● *some public hols.*

Arles ⑬

Emperor Constantine

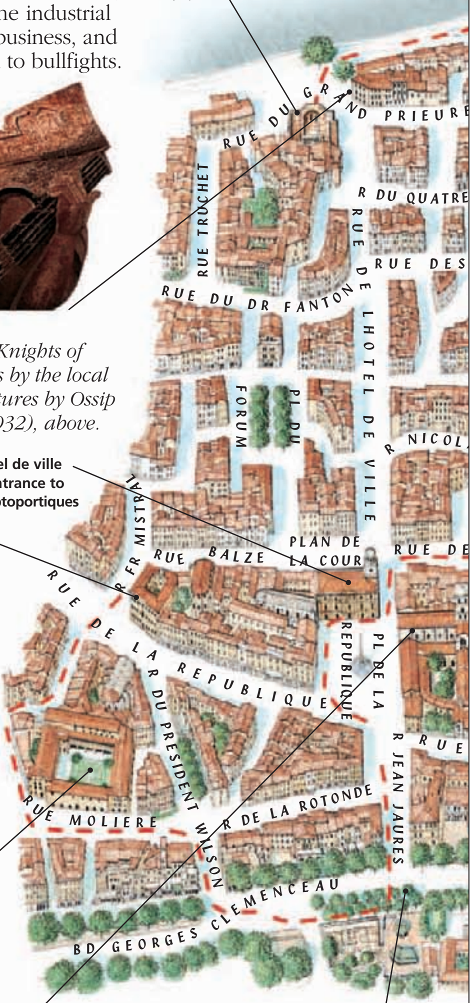
Few other towns in Provence combine all the region's charms so well as Arles. Its position on the Rhône makes it a natural, historic gateway to the Camargue *(see pp510–11)*. Its Roman remains, such as the arena and Constantine's baths, are complemented by the ocher walls and Roman-tiled roofs of later buildings. A bastion of Provençal tradition and culture, its museums are among the best in the region. Van Gogh spent time here in 1888–9, but Arles is no longer the industrial town he painted. Visitors are now its main business, and entertainment ranges from the Arles Festival to bullfights.

Palais Constantine was once a grand imperial palace. Now only its vast Roman baths remain, dating from the 4th century AD. They are remarkably well preserved and give an idea of the luxury that bathers enjoyed.

Musée Réattu
This museum, in the old Commandery of the Knights of Malta, houses witty Picasso sketches, paintings by the local artist Jacques Réattu (1760–1833), and sculptures by Ossip Zadkine, including La Grande Odalisque (1932), above.

Museon Arlaten
In 1904 the poet Frédéric Mistral used his Nobel Prize money to establish this museum devoted to his beloved native Provence. Parts of the collection are arranged in room settings, and even the museum attendants wear traditional Arles costume.

Hotel de ville & entrance to Cryptoportiques

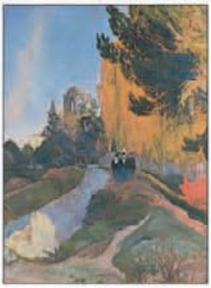

RUE DU GRAND PRIEURE
R DU QUATRE
RUE TRUCHET
RUE DE L HOTEL DE VILLE
RUE DES
RUE DU DR FANTON
FORUM
PL DU
R NICOL
R FR MISTRAL
RUE BALZE
PLAN DE LA COUR
RUE DE
RUE DE LA REPUBLIQUE
R DU PRESIDENT WILSON
REPUBLIQUE
PL DE LA
R JEAN JAURES
RUE
R DE LA ROTONDE
RUE MOLIERE
BD GEORGES CLEMENCEAU

Espace Van Gogh, in a former hospital where the artist was treated in 1889, is a cultural center devoted to his life and work.

★ Eglise St-Trophime
This church combines a noble 12th-century Romanesque exterior with superb Romanesque and Gothic cloisters. The ornate main portal is carved with saints and apostles.

Tourist information

0 meters 100
0 yards 100



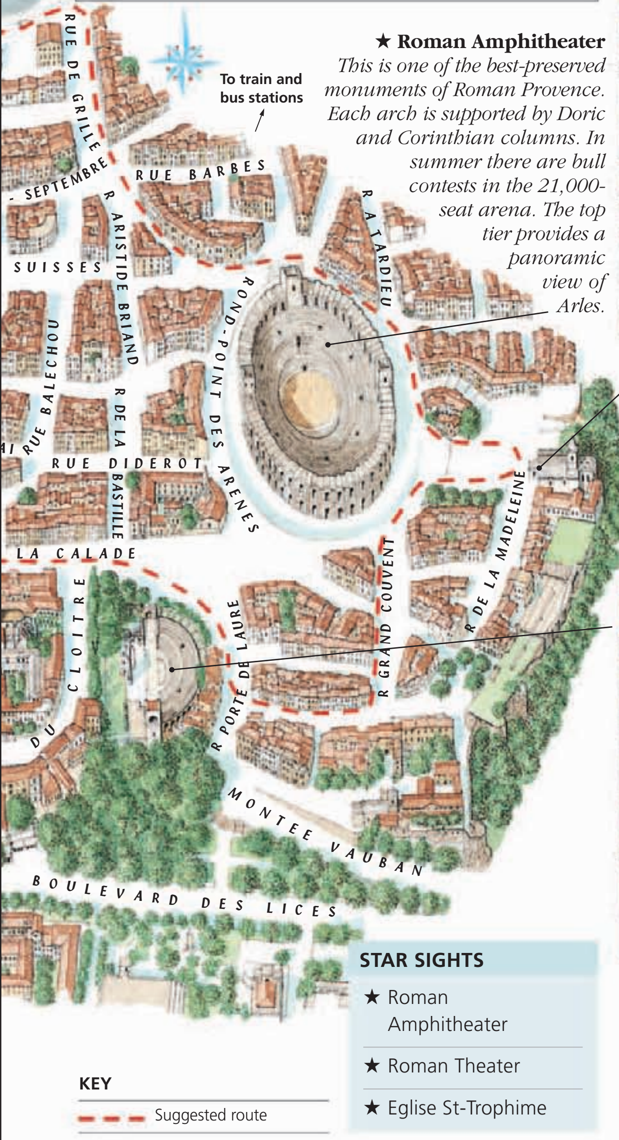
Les Alyscamps by Paul Gauguin

LES ALYSCAMPS

A tree-lined avenue of broken medieval tombs is the focal point of these "Elysian Fields" to the southeast of Arles. It became Christian in the 4th century and was a prestigious burial ground until the 12th century. Some sarcophagi were sold to museums; others have been neglected. Mentioned in Dante's *Inferno*, painted by Van Gogh and Gauguin, it is a place for thought and inspiration.

VISITORS' CHECKLIST

Bouches-du-Rhône. 👥 *53,000.* ✈ *15 miles (25 km) NW Arles.* 🚆 🚌 *av Paulin Talabot.* ℹ *bd des Lices (04 90 18 41 20).* ⛺ *Wed, Sat.* 🎭 *Arles Festival (Jul); Prémice du Riz (Sep).* **Musée Réattu** ○ *Tue–Sun.* **Museon Arlaten** ○ *Jul–Sep: daily; Oct–Jun: Tue–Sun.* ***Both*** ● *Jan 1, May 1, Nov 1, Dec 25.* ♿ **www**.museonarlaten.fr



RUE DE GRILLE
SEPTEMBRE
RUE BARBES
To train and bus stations
SUISSES
R ARISTIDE BRIAND
R A TARDIEU
ROND-POINT DES ARENES
RUE BALECHOU
R DE LA BASTILLE
RUE DIDEROT
LA CALADE
RUE DU CLOITRE
R PORTE DE LAURE
R GRAND COUVENT
R DE LA MADELEINE
MONTEE VAUBAN
BOULEVARD DES LICES

★ Roman Amphitheater
This is one of the best-preserved monuments of Roman Provence. Each arch is supported by Doric and Corinthian columns. In summer there are bull contests in the 21,000-seat arena. The top tier provides a panoramic view of Arles.

Notre-Dame-de-la-Major is the church in which the *gardians* (cowboys) of the Camargue celebrate the feast day of their patron saint, St. George. Although the building dates from the 12th to 17th centuries, a Roman temple existed on this spot hundreds of years earlier.

★ Roman Theater
Once a fortress, its stones were later used for other buildings. Today, the theater stages the Arles Festival. Its remaining columns are called the "two widows."

STAR SIGHTS

- ★ Roman Amphitheater
- ★ Roman Theater
- ★ Eglise St-Trophime

KEY

▬ ▬ ▬ Suggested route

The Camargue ⓮

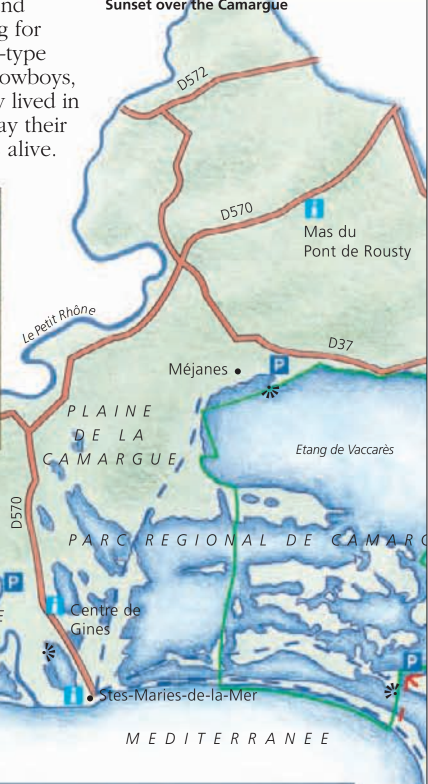
The Rhône delta was responsible for the formation of more than 280,000 acres (112,000 ha) of wetlands, pastures, dunes, and salt flats that make up the Camargue, but human efforts are needed to preserve it. The region now maintains a fragile ecological balance, in which a unique collection of flora flourishes, including tamarisk and narcissi, and fauna such as egrets and ibises. The pastures provide grazing for sheep, cattle, and small white Arab-type horses, ridden by the *gardians* or cowboys, a hardy community who traditionally lived in thatched huts *(cabanes)* and still play their part in keeping Camargue traditions alive.

Camargue gardian

Sunset over the Camargue

Black Bulls

In a Provençal bull contest (known as a course), the animals are not killed. Instead, red rosettes are plucked from between their horns with a small hook.


D572
D570
Mas du Pont de Rousty
Le Petit Rhône
D37
Méjanes
PLAINE DE LA CAMARGUE
Etang de Vaccarès
D570
PARC REGIONAL DE CAMAR
PETITE CAMARGUE
Centre de Gines
Stes-Maries-de-la-Mer
MEDITERRANEE
0 kilometers 5
0 miles 5

Les Stes-Maries-de-la-Mer

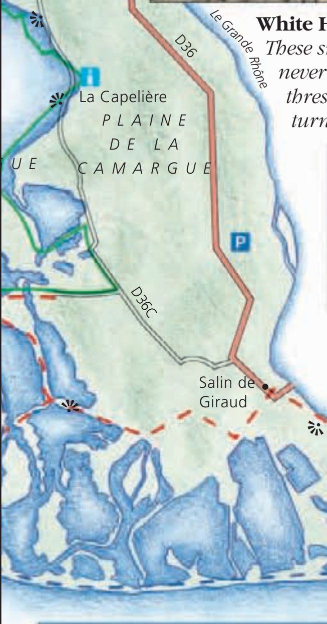
The May gypsy pilgrimage to this fortified church marks the legendary arrival by boat in AD 18 of Mary Magdalene, St. Martha, and the sister of the Virgin Mary. Statues in the church depict the event.

Flamingoes

These striking birds are always associated with the Camargue, but the region supports many other breeds, including herons, kingfishers, owls, and birds of prey. The area around Ginès is the best place to see them.

KEY

🟩	Nature reserve boundary
🟥	Walking routes
🟦	Walking and cycling routes



White Horses

These small, sturdy horses, which are never stabled, were once used to thresh grain. The foal's dark coat turns white after about five years.

Gardians' Cabin

Traditionally, gardians *lived in thatched cabins. Today, members of the* gardian *brotherhood show off their horsemanship in the Arles arena each April.*

Mountains of Salt

Sea salt is by far the largest "harvest" of the Camargue. Throughout the summer, vast brine pans evaporate and the crystals are heaped into shimmering camelles *up to 26 ft (8 m) high.*

VISITORS' CHECKLIST

Bouches-du-Rhône. ✈ *Montpellier-Méditerranée, 56 miles (90 km) east.* 🚆 🚌 *av Paulin Talabot, Arles.* ℹ *5 av Van Gogh, Saintes-Maries-de-la-Mer.* ***Tel** 04 90 97 82 55.* *Les Pèlerinages (end May, end Oct), Festival du Cheval (Jul 14).* **Musée Baroncelli,** rue Victor Hugo, Saintes-Maries-de-la-Mer. ***Tel** 04 90 97 87 60.* ○ *Apr–mid-Nov: times vary, phone to check.* ● *mid-Nov–Mar.* **www**.saintesmaries.com

Aix-en-Provence ⑮

Bouches du Rhône. *135,000.* 🚆 🚌 ℹ *2 place du Général-de-Gaulle (04 42 16 11 61). daily.* **www**.aixenprovencetourism.com

Founded by the Romans in 103 BC, Aix was frequently attacked, first by the Visigoths in AD 477, later by Lombards, Franks, and Saracens. Despite this, the city prospered. By the end of the 12th century it was capital of Provence. A center of art and learning, it reached its peak in the 15th century during the reign of "Good King" René. He is shown in Nicolas Froment's *Triptych of the Burning Bush* in the 13th-century Gothic **Cathédrale de St-Sauveur**, also noted for its 16th-century walnut doors, Merovingian baptistry, and Romanesque cloisters.

Aix is still a center of art and learning, and its many museums include the **Musée Granet** of fine arts and archeology, and the **Musée des Tapisseries** (tapestries), in the Palais de l'Archevêché.

Aix has been called "the city of a thousand fountains." Three of the best are situated on cours Mirabeau. On one side are 17th- and 18th-century buildings with wrought-iron balconies; on the other are cafés – so much a part of the city's social life. The Old Town centers on place de l'Hôtel de Ville, with its colorful flower market. In the northwest of town is the **Pavillon de Vendôme**, housing furniture and works of art by Van Loo. Aix's most famous son is Paul Cézanne. The **Atelier Cézanne** is kept as it was when he died in 1906. Montagne Ste-Victoire, inspiration for many of his paintings, is 9 miles (15 km) east of Aix.

🏛 Musée Granet
Pl St-Jean de Malte. ***Tel** 04 42 52 88 32.* ○ *Tue–Sun.*

🏛 Musée des Tapisseries
28 pl des Martyrs de la Résistance. ***Tel** 04 42 23 09 91.* ○ *Wed–Mon.* ● *Jan.*

Atelier Cézanne
9 av Paul Cézanne. ***Tel** 04 42 21 06 53.* ○ *daily.* ● *Dec–Feb: Sun; some public hols.*
www.atelier-cezanne.com

Old harbor of Marseille, looking toward the quai de Rive Neuve

Marseille ⑯

Bouches-du-Rhône. 👥 *900,000.* ✈ 🚆 🚌 ⛴ ℹ *4 La Canebière (04 91 13 89 00).* 🛒 *daily.* **www**.marseille-tourisme.com

A Greek settlement, founded in the 7th century BC, then called Massilia, Marseille was seized by the Romans in 49 BC. It became the "Gateway to the West" for most Oriental trade. France's largest port and lively second-largest city has close links with the Middle East and North Africa.

In Marseille, narrow stepped streets, quiet squares, and fine 18th-century façades contrast with the bustle of boulevard Canebière and the Cité Radieuse, Le Corbusier's post-war radical housing complex.

The old harbor now only handles small boats, but its daily fish market is renowned.

Marseille has many excellent museums. Those in the old harbor area include the **Musée des Docks Romains**, the **Musée d'Histoire de Marseille**, the **Musée du Vieux Marseille**, and the upbeat **Musée de la Mode**.

The **Musée Cantini**, to the south, houses the 20th-century art collection of sculptor Jules Cantini. It includes Surrealist, Cubist, and Fauve paintings. On the other side of the city is the **Musée Grobet-Labadié**, with its fine furniture, tapestries, and rare musical instruments.

Marseille has an extensive tramway system and has introduced a bike rental program that allows people to rent a bike in one part of town and return it in another.

🏛 Musée des Beaux-Arts

Palais Longchamp, pl Aile Gauche. ***Tel*** *04 91 14 59 30* ○ *Tue–Sun.* ● *until 2012.* 📷 ♿

This museum is housed in the handsome 19th-century Palais Longchamp. Works include Michel Serre's graphic views of Marseille's plague of 1721, Pierre Puget's town plans for the city, and murals depicting it in Greek and Roman times.

Château d'If

Tel *04 91 59 02 30.* ○ *Apr–Aug: daily; Sep–Mar: Tue–Sun.* 📷 ☕

The Château d'If (Castle of Yew) stands on a tiny island 1 mile (2 km) southwest of the port. A formidable fortress, it was built in 1529 to house artillery, but never put to military use and later became a prison. Alexandre Dumas' fictional "Count of Monte Cristo" was supposed to have been imprisoned here, and visitors can see a special cell, complete with escape hole. Most real-life inmates were either common criminals or political prisoners.

✝ Notre-Dame-de-la-Garde

Built between 1853 and 1864, this Neo-Byzantine basilica dominates the city. Its belfry, 151 ft (46 m) high, is capped by a huge gilded statue of the Virgin. The lavishly decorated interior has colored marble and mosaic facings.

✝ Abbaye de St-Victor

Similar to a fortress in appearance, the abbey was rebuilt in the 11th century after destruction by the Saracens. In the French Revolution, the rebels used it as a barracks and prison.

There is an intriguing crypt in the abbey's church, with an original catacomb chapel and a number of pagan and Christian sarcophagi.

On February 2 each year, St-Victor becomes a place of pilgrimage. Boat-shaped cakes are sold to commemorate the legendary arrival of St. Mary Magdalene, Lazarus, and St. Martha nearly 2,000 years ago.

✝ Cathédrale de la Major

Built in Neo-Byzantine style, this is the largest 19th-century church in France, 463 ft (141 m) long and 230 ft (70 m) high. In the crypt are the tombs of the bishops of Marseille. By it

Le Corbusier's innovative Cité Radieuse in Marseille

Fish market at Marseille

is the small and beautiful Ancienne Cathédrale de la Major.

🏛 Vieille Charité

Rue de la Charité. ***Tel*** *04 91 14 58 80.* ○ *Tue–Sun.* ● *pub hols.* ▨ ♿ 🍴

In 1640, the construction of a shelter "for the poor and beggars" of Marseille was begun by royal decree. 100 years later, Pierre Puget's hospital and domed church were opened. Now, the restored building houses the Musée d'Archéologie Egyptienne, with its fine collection of Egyptian artifacts; the Musée des Arts Africains is on the second floor.

Cassis ⑰

Bouches-du-Rhône. 👥 *8,000.* 🚆 🚌 ℹ *quai Moulins, Le Port (08 92 25 98 92).* 🧺 *Wed & Fri.*

Many of the villages along this coast have been developed to the point where they have all but lost their original charm, but Cassis is still much the same little fishing port that attracted artists such as Dufy, Signac, and Derain. This is a place in which to relax at a waterside café, watching the fishermen or street performers while enjoying a plate of seafood and a bottle of the local dry white wine for which Cassis is famous.

From Marseille to Cassis the coastline forms narrow inlets, the **Calanques**, their jagged white cliffs (some as much as 1,312 ft/400 m high) reflected in dazzling turquoise water. Wildlife abounds here, with countless seabirds, foxes, stone martens, bats, large snakes, and lizards. The flora is no less impressive, with more than 900 plant species, of which 50 are classified as rare. The En-Vau and Sormiou Calanques are especially lovely.

Toulon ⑱

Var. 👥 *170,000.* ✈ 🚆 🚌 ⛴ ℹ *334 av de la République (04 94 18 53 00).* 🧺 *Tue–Sun.* **www**.toulontourisme.com

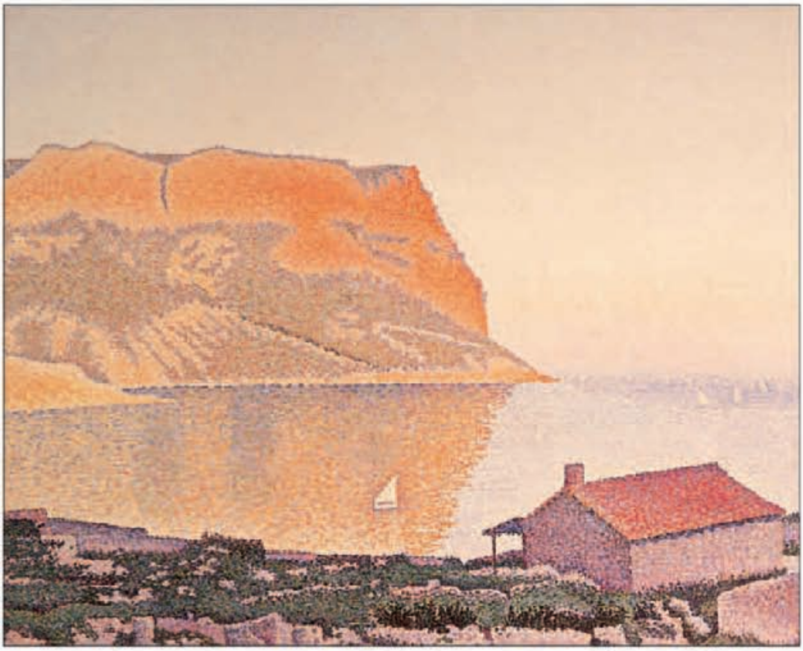
In 1793 this naval base was captured by an Anglo-Spanish fleet, but was retaken by the young Napoleon Bonaparte. The **Musée National de la Marine** is a focus for history. The **Musée d'Art de Toulon**, housed in an Italian Renaissance building, has a collection of works representing Fauvism, Minimalism, and Realism. The tower of the former town hall is all that remains of pre-war Quai Cronstadt (rebuilt and renamed Quai Stalingrad). The war-damaged Old Town has a few original buildings, and the fish market is worth a visit.

🏛 Musée National de la Marine

Pl Monsenergue. ***Tel*** *04 94 02 02 01.* ○ *daily.* ● *Tue (Sep–Jun), May 1, Dec 25.* ▨ ♿ *restr.* 🛍 **www**.musee-marine.fr

🏛 Musée d'Art de Toulon

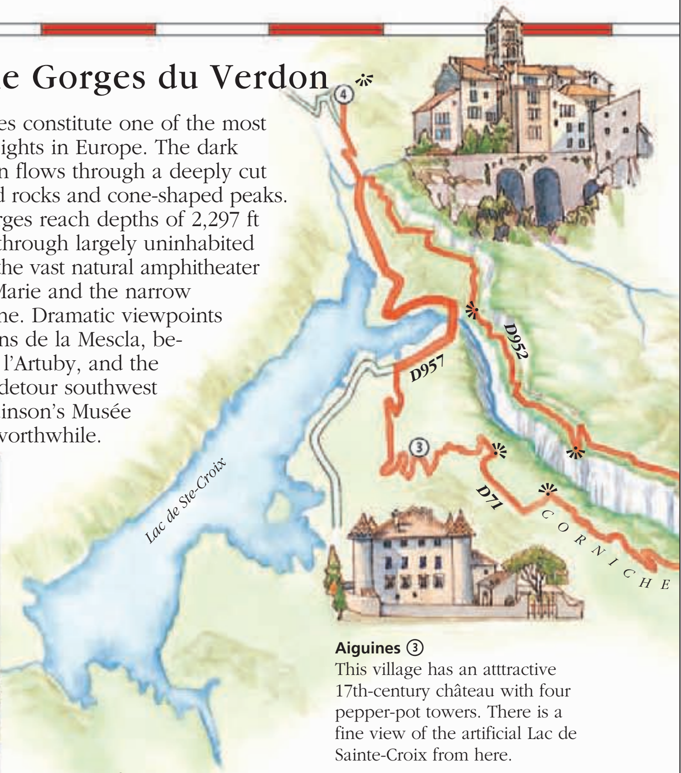
113 bd Marc Leclerc. ***Tel*** *04 94 36 81 00.* ○ *Tue–Sun.* ● *public hols.* ▨



Paul Signac's *Cap Canaille*, painted at Cassis in 1889

Tour of the Gorges du Verdon

The Verdon Gorges constitute one of the most dramatic natural sights in Europe. The dark green river Verdon flows through a deeply cut valley with twisted rocks and cone-shaped peaks. In places, the Gorges reach depths of 2,297 ft (700 m), passing through largely uninhabited country between the vast natural amphitheater of Moustiers-Ste-Marie and the narrow streets of Castellane. Dramatic viewpoints include the Balcons de la Mescla, beyond the Pont de l'Artuby, and the Point Sublime. A detour southwest of Moutiers to Quinson's Musée de Préhistoire is worthwhile.



Aiguines ③
This village has an atttractive 17th-century château with four pepper-pot towers. There is a fine view of the artificial Lac de Sainte-Croix from here.

Verdon Gorges from the Castellane road

Hyères ⓳

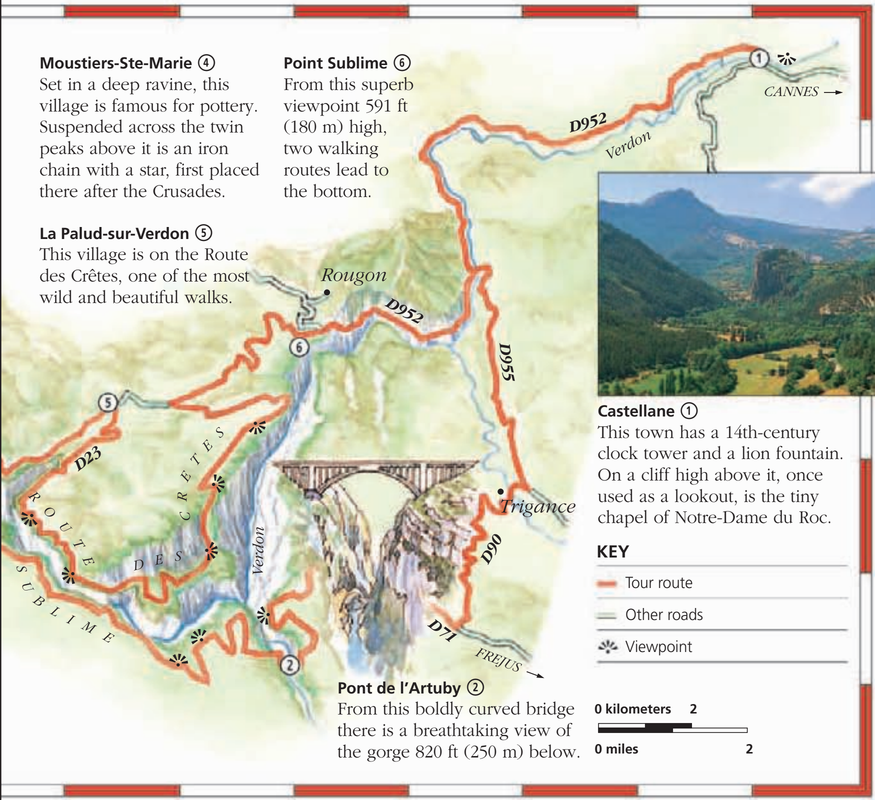
Var. 👥 54,000. ✈ 🚉 🚌 ⛴ ℹ Av Ambroise Thomas (04 94 01 84 50). **www**.hyeres-tourisme.com Tue–Sun.

Toward the end of the 18th century, Hyères became one of the first health resorts of the Côte d'Azur. Among its subsequent visitors were Queen Victoria and writers Robert Louis Stevenson and Edith Wharton.

The main sights are found in the medieval streets of the Vieille Ville, which lead past the spacious, flagstoned place Massillon to a ruined castle and views over the coast.

Modern Hyères is imbued with a lingering Belle Epoque charm which has become popular with experimental film-makers. It continues to attract a health-conscious crowd and is a major center for aquatic sports.

Fishing off Porquerolles, the largest of the Iles d'Hyères



Moustiers-Ste-Marie ④
Set in a deep ravine, this village is famous for pottery. Suspended across the twin peaks above it is an iron chain with a star, first placed there after the Crusades.

Point Sublime ⑥
From this superb viewpoint 591 ft (180 m) high, two walking routes lead to the bottom.

La Palud-sur-Verdon ⑤
This village is on the Route des Crêtes, one of the most wild and beautiful walks.

Castellane ①
This town has a 14th-century clock tower and a lion fountain. On a cliff high above it, once used as a lookout, is the tiny chapel of Notre-Dame du Roc.

Pont de l'Artuby ②
From this boldly curved bridge there is a breathtaking view of the gorge 820 ft (250 m) below.

Îles d'Hyères ❸

Var. ✈ *Toulon-Hyères.* 🚆 🚌 ⛴ *Hyères.* ℹ *Hyères (04 94 01 84 50).* **www**.hyeres-tourisme.com

Locally known as the Îles d'Or, after the gold color of their cliffs, this glamorous trio of islands can be reached by boat from Hyères, Le Lavandou, and, in summer, Cavalaire and Port-de-Miramar.

Porquerolles, the largest of the three, measures 4.5 miles (7 km) by 2 miles (3 km). It is covered in rich vegetation, much of which, for instance the Mexican bellombra tree, was introduced from a variety of exotic foreign climes.

The island's main town, also known as Porquerolles, looks more like a north African colonial settlement than a Provençal village. It was established in 1820 as a retirement town for Napoleon's most honored troops. All the island's beaches lie along the northern coastline. The best, the long, sandy Plage Notre-Dame, one of the finest beaches in Provence, sits in a sheltered bay about an hour's walk from Porquerolles.

A stroll around lush, hilly **Port-Cros**, covering just 1 sq mile (2.5 sq km), takes the best part of a day. It rises to 640 ft (195 m), the highest point on any of the islands.

Port-Cros has been a national park since 1963. A unique preserve of flora and fauna, its waters are also protected. There is even a 984-ft (300-m) scenic swimming route. You can buy a waterproof guide to the underwater wildlife.

The wild, virtually treeless **Île du Levant** is reached by boat from Port-Cros. Its main draw is the oldest naturist resort in France, Héliopolis, founded in 1931. The eastern half of the island, controlled by the French navy, is permanently closed to the public.

Massif des Maures ㉑

Var. ✈ *Toulon-Hyères.* 🚆 *Hyères, Toulon or Fréjus.* 🚌 *Bormes-les-Mimosas.* ⛴ *Toulon.* ℹ *1 pl Gambetta, Bormes-les-Mimosas (04 94 01 38 38).*

The dense wilderness of pine, oak, and sweet chestnut covering the Maures mountain range probably gave rise to its name, meaning dark or gloomy. It extends nearly 40 miles (65 km) between Hyères and Fréjus.

The D558 north of Cogolin offers a route to the heart of the Maures. Along the way is La Garde-Freinet, well-known for its bottle cork industry.

Northwest of Cannet-des-Maures lies the Abbaye de Thoronet. With the abbeys at Sénanque, in Vaucluse, and Silvacane, in the Bouches-du-Rhône, it is known as one of the "Three Sisters" of Provence.

Harborside at St-Tropez

St-Tropez ㉒

Var. 👥 *6,000.* 🚌 ℹ *quai Jean Jaurès (04 94 97 45 21).* ⊖ *Tue & Sat.*
www.ot-saint-tropez.com

The geography of St-Tropez kept it untouched by the earliest development of the Côte d'Azur. Tucked away at the tip of a peninsula, it is the only north-facing town on the coast and so did not appeal to those seeking a warm and sheltered winter resort. In 1892 the painter Paul Signac was among the first outsiders to respond to its unspoiled charm, encouraging friends, such as the painters Matisse and Bonnard, to join him. In the 1920s the Parisian writer Colette also made her home here. St-Tropez also began to attract star-spotters, hoping for a glimpse of celebrities such as the Prince of Wales.

During World War II the beaches around St-Tropez were the scene of Allied landings, and part of the town was heavily bombed. Then, in the 1950s, young Parisians began to arrive, and the Bardot-Vadim movie helped to create the reputation of modern St-Tropez as a playground for gilded youth. The wild public behavior and turbulent love affairs of Roger Vadim, Brigitte Bardot, Sacha Distel, and others left fiction far behind. Mass tourism followed, with visitors once again more interested in spotting a celebrity than in visiting the **Musée de l'Annonciade** with its outstanding collection of works by Signac, Derain, Rouault, Bonnard and others. Bardot had a villa at La Madrague, but tourists invaded her privacy, so she left.

Today, there are far more luxury yachts than fishing boats moored in St-Tropez harbor. Its cafés make ideal bases for people- and yacht-watching. Another center of the action is place des Lices, both for the Harley-Davidson set and the morning market. The tiny **Maison des Papillons** (Butterfly House), with its collection of more than 20,000 species, is an increasingly popular attraction.

The best beaches are found outside the town, including the golden curve of Pampelonne, jammed with beach clubs and restaurants. This is the beach on which to see and be seen. St-Tropez has no train station, so driving and parking can be a nightmare in summer.

It is said that St-Tropez takes its name from a Roman soldier martyred as a Christian by the Emperor Nero. Each year in May a *bravade* in his honor takes place when an effigy of the saint is carried through the town to the accompaniment of musket fire.

Nearby are two small towns of differing character but equal charm. **Port-Grimaud** was only built in 1966 but the sensitive use of traditional architecture makes it seem older. Most of its "streets" are canals. Up in the hills, the winding streets of **Ramatuelle** have been restored to perfection by the largely celebrity population.

🏛 Maison des Papillons

9 rue Etienne Berny. ***Tel** 04 94 97 63 45.* ○ *Apr–Oct & Christmas school hols: Mon–Sat.* ♿

🏛 Musée de l'Annonciade

Pl Grammont. ***Tel** 04 94 17 84 10.*
○ *Dec–Oct: Wed–Mon.* ● *Jan 1, Ascension, May 1 & 17, Nov, Dec 25.*
♿ 🚫 🛍

Stylish solution to the traffic problems in St-Tropez

BRIGITTE BARDOT

Brigitte Bardot in 1956

In 1956, Brigitte Bardot's film, *And God Created Woman*, was shot in St-Tropez by her new husband, Roger Vadim. By settling in St-Tropez, "BB" the sex-goddess changed the fortunes of the sleepy little fishing village and ultimately the Côte d'Azur, making it the center of her hedonistic lifestyle. In 1974, on her 40th birthday, she celebrated her retirement from movies at Club 55 on Pampelonne Beach, and now devotes her time to her animal sanctuary.

Digne-les-Bains ㉓

Alpes-de-Haute-Provence. 👥 *17,500.* 🚆 🚌 ℹ *pl de Tampinet (04 92 36 62 62).* 🛒 *Wed, Sat.* **www**.ot-dignelesbains.fr

This charming spa town in the foothills of the Alps features in Victor Hugo's *Les Misérables*. A trip on the *Train des Pignes* from Nice offers superb views. Apart from the spa, Digne also offers a lavender festival *(see p38)* and **Le Jardin des Papillons**, France's only butterfly garden.

🏛 Le Jardin des Papillons
St Benoît. ***Tel** 04 92 36 70 70.*
○ *Apr–Sep (call for opening times).* 📷 ✋ ☕ *in summer.* 🛍
www.proserpine.org

Fréjus ㉔

Var. 👥 *53,000.* 🚆 🚌 ℹ *325 rue Jean Jaurès (04 94 51 83 83).* 🛒 *Tue, Wed, Fri–Sun.* **www**.frejus.fr

The modern town of Fréjus is dwarfed in importance by two impressive historic sites. The remains of the Roman port of **Amphithéâtre** (founded by Julius Caesar in 49 BC) may not be as complete as those at Orange or Arles but they are of exceptional variety. A great amphitheater, fragments of an aqueduct, a theater, and part of a rampart gateway remain. The sea has receded over the centuries and there are few traces of the original harbor.

The cathedral on place Formigé marks the entrance to the **Cité Episcopale**. The fortified enclave includes the 5th-century baptistry, one of the oldest in France, and the cathedral cloister, its coffered medieval roof decorated with scenes from the Apocalypse.

In 1959 Fréjus was hit by a wall of water as the Malpasset Barrage burst. To the north the ruined dam can still be seen.

⛩ Amphithéâtre
Rue Henri Vadon. ***Tel** 04 94 51 34 31.*
○ *Tue–Sun.* ● *Jan 1, May 1, Dec 25.* ✋ ☕

✝ Cité Episcopale
58 rue de Fleury. ***Tel** 04 94 51 26 30.* ○ *Jun–Sep: daily.* ● *Jan 1, May 1, Nov 1 & 11, Dec 25.* 📷 *cloisters.* ♿ 🛍 ✋

THE CREATION OF A PERFUME

Lavender water

The best perfumes begin as a formula of essential oils extracted from natural sources. The blend of aromas is created by a perfumer called a "nose" because of his or her exceptional sense of smell. A perfume may use as many as 300 essences, all painstakingly extracted from plants by various methods: steam distillation, extraction by volatile solvents, and *enfluerage a froid* (for costly or potent essences). With this process, pungent blossoms are placed onto layers of fats for several days until the fats are saturated. The oils are then "washed" out with alcohol, and when this evaporates, it leaves the "pure" perfume essence behind.

Grasse flowers

St-Raphaël ㉕

Var. 👥 *40,000.* 🚆 🚌 ℹ *99 quai Albert 1er (04 94 19 52 52).* **www**. saint-raphael.com

Delightfully situated, St-Raphaël is a charming, old-style Côte d'Azur resort with Art Nouveau architecture and a palm-fronded promenade. Aside from its beaches, it offers a marina, a casino, Roman ruins, a 12th-century church, and a museum with treasures from a Roman wreck found by Jacques Cousteau.

It was here that Napoleon Bonaparte landed in 1799 on his return from Egypt.

Grasse ㉖

Alpes-Maritimes. 👥 *50,000.* 🚌 ℹ *Palais des Congrès, 22 cours Honoré Cresp (04 93 36 66 66).* **www**.grasse-riviera.com

Cradled by hills, with views out to sea, Grasse is surrounded by fields of lavender, mimosa, jasmine, and roses. Grasse has been the center of the world's perfume industry since the 16th century, when Catherine de' Médici set the fashion for scented leather gloves. At that time, Grasse was also known as the center for leather tanning. The tanneries have gone, but the perfume houses founded in the 18th and 19th centuries are still in business, although today Grasse perfumes are made from imported flowers or chemicals. Fragonard and Molinard have museums, but the best place to learn is at the **Musée Internationale de la Parfumerie**, which has a garden of fragrant plants.

Grasse was the birthplace of Jean-Honoré Fragonard, the artist. The **Villa-Musée Fragonard** is decorated with murals by his son. Fragonard's only religious work is in the **Cathédrale de Notre-Dame-du-Puy** in the Old Town, with three paintings by Rubens. The place aux Aires and the place du Cours typify Grasse's charm, surrounded by streets with Renaissance staircases and balconies.

🏛 Musée International de la Parfumerie
2 bd de Jeu du Ballon.
***Tel** 04 97 05 58 00.*
○ *Mon, Wed–Sun.* ● *Nov; public hols.* 📷 ♿ ☕ 🛍 **www**.museesdegrasse.com

🏛 Villa-Musée Fragonard
23 bd Fragonard.
***Tel** 04 93 36 80 20.*
○ *Wed–Mon.* ● *Nov; public hols.* 📷 🛍

Statue honoring Jean-Honoré Fragonard in Grasse

Lavender fields near Puimoisson, Alpes-de-Haute-Provence ▷

High summer on the beach at Cannes, overlooked by the Carlton Hotel

Cannes ㉗

Alpes-Maritimes. 👥 *70,000.* 🚆 🚌 ⛴ ℹ *Palais des Festivals, 1 La Croisette (04 92 99 84 22).* ⊖ *Tue–Sun.* **www**.palaisdesfestivals.com

Just as Grasse is synonymous with the perfume industry, the first thing that most people associate with Cannes is its many festivals, especially the International Film Festival. There is much more to the city than these glittering events. It was Lord Brougham, the British Lord Chancellor, who put Cannes on the map, although Prosper Mérimée, Inspector of Historic Monuments, allegedly visited Cannes two months before him. Lord Brougham stopped here in 1834, unable to reach Nice due to a cholera outbreak there. Struck by the beauty and mild climate of what was then just a small fishing port, he built a villa here. Other foreigners followed and Cannes became established as a top Mediterranean resort.

The Old Town which Lord Brougham knew is centered in the Le Suquet district, on the slopes of Mont Chevalier. Part of the old city wall can still be seen on place de la Castre, which is dominated by the **Notre-Dame de l'Espérance**, built in the 16th and 17th centuries in the Provençal Gothic style. An 11th-century watch tower is another attractive feature of the quarter, and the castle keep houses the **Musée de la Castre**, the eclectic finds of a 19th-century Dutch explorer, Baron Lycklama.

The famed **boulevard de la Croisette** is lined with gardens and palm trees. One side is occupied by luxury boutiques and hotels such as the Carlton, built in Belle Epoque style, whose twin cupolas were modeled on the breasts of La Belle Otero, a famous member of the 19th-century *demi-monde*. Opposite are some of the finest sandy beaches on this coast. The glamor of the Croisette, once one of the world's grandest thoroughfares, seems faded in the noise and fumes of summer.

Îles de Lérins

⛴ *depart from: le Quai des Îles.* ℹ *Horizon (04 92 98 71 36 for Île Ste-Marguerite), Planaria (04 92 98 71 38 for Île St-Honorat).*

Just off the coast from Cannes are the Îles de Lérins. The fort on **Île Sainte-Marguerite** is where the mysterious Man in the Iron Mask was imprisoned in the late 17th century. A

CANNES FILM FESTIVAL

The first Cannes Film Festival took place in 1946 and, for almost 20 years, it remained a small and exclusive affair, attended by the artists and celebrities who lived or were staying on the coast. The arrival of the "starlet," especially Brigitte Bardot, in the mid-1950s marked the change from artistic event to media circus, but Cannes remains the international marketplace for film-makers and distributors, with the *Palme d'Or* award conferring high status on its winner. The annual film festival is held in the huge Palais des Festivals, opened in 1982. It has three auditoriums, two exhibition halls, conference rooms, a casino, nightclub, and restaurant.

Gérard Depardieu and family arriving at the festival popular theory is that his face had to be hidden because he resembled someone very important indeed – possibly even Louis XIV. Visitors can see the tiny cell that held him for more than ten years.

Ile Saint-Honorat has an 11th-century tower in which the resident monks took refuge during raids by the Saracens. There are also five ancient chapels. Both islands offer peaceful woodland walks, fine views, and quiet coves for swimming.

Beside the Boulevard de la Croisette

Cap d'Antibes ㉘

Alpes-Maritimes. ✈ *Nice.* 🚆 🚌 *Antibes.* ⛴ *Nice.* ℹ *11 pl du Gén de Gaulle, Antibes (04 97 23 11 11).* **www**.antibesjuanlespins.com

With its sumptuous villas in their lush grounds, this rocky, wooded peninsula, known as "the Cap" to regulars, has been a symbol of luxury life on the Riviera since it was frequented by F. Scott Fitzgerald and the rich American set in the 1920s. One of the wealthiest of all, magnate Frank Jay Gould invested in the resort of Juan-les-Pins and it became the focus of high life on the Cap. Today, memories of the Jazz Age live on at the Jazz Festival, when international stars perform *(see p37)*.

At the highest point of the peninsula, the sailors' chapel of **La Garoupe** has a collection of votive offerings and a 14th-century Russian icon. Nearby is the **Jardin Thuret**, created in 1856 to acclimatize tropical plants. Much of the exotic flora of the region began its naturalization here.

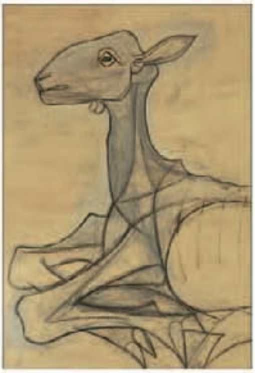
🍁 Jardin Thuret
90 chemin Raymond. ***Tel*** *04 97 21 25 03.* ○ *Mon–Fri.* ● *public hols.*

Antibes ㉙

Alpes-Maritimes. 👥 *70,000.* 🚆 🚌 ⛴ ℹ *11 pl du Général de Gaulle (04 97 23 11 11).* 🧺 *Tue–Sun.* **www**.antibesjuanlespins.com

The lively town of Antibes was founded by the Greeks as Antipolis and settled by the Romans. In the 14th century, Savoy's possession of the town was contended by France until it fell to them in 1481, after which **Fort Carré** was built and the port, now a center of Mediterranean yachting, was remodeled by Vauban.

The Château Grimaldi, formerly a residence of Monaco's ruling family, was built in the 12th century. It now houses the **Musée Picasso**. In 1946 the artist used part of the castle as a studio and, in gratitude, donated all 150 works completed during his stay, including *The Goat*. Most are inspired by his love of the sea, including *La Joie de Vivre*.



The Goat **(1946) by Pablo Picasso**

The pottery in the **Musée d'Histoire et d'Archéologie** includes objects salvaged from shipwrecks from the Middle Ages to the 18th century.

🏛 Musée Picasso
Château Grimaldi. ***Tel*** *04 92 90 54 20.* ○ *Tue–Sun.* 📷 ♿ 🛍 ☕

🏛 Musée d'Histoire et d'Archéologie
1 Bastion St-André. ***Tel*** *04 92 90 56 87.* ○ *Tue–Sun.* ● *public hols.* 📷 ♿ 🛍

Sailing boats in the harbor at Antibes

Vallauris ㉚

Alpes-Maritimes. 👪 *27,000.*
🚆 🚌 ℹ *square 8 mai 1945*
(04 93 63 82 58). ⛺ *Tue–Sun.*
www.vallauris-golfe-juan.fr

Vallauris owes its fame to the influence of Pablo Picasso, who rescued the town's pottery industry. In 1951, the village authorities commissioned Picasso to paint a mural in the deconsecrated chapel next to the castle, and his *War and Peace* (1952) is the chief exhibit of the **Musée National Picasso**. In the main square is a bronze statue, *Man with a Sheep*, donated by Picasso.

🏛 Musée National Picasso
Place de la Libération. ***Tel*** *04 93 64 71 83.* ○ *Wed–Mon.* ● *Jan 1, May 1, Nov 1 & 11, Dec 25.* 📷 ♿ *ground floor only.* 🛍
www.musee-picasso.vallauris.fr

Biot ㉛

Alpes-Maritimes. 👪 *8,200.* 🚆 🚌 ℹ
46 rue St-Sebastien (04 93 65 78 00).
⛺ *Tue.* **www**.biot.fr

A typical little hill village, Biot has retained its charm and has always attracted artists and artisans. The best known is Fernand Léger who made his first ceramics here in 1949. Examples of these and other works by him are shown in the **Musée Fernand Léger** outside town. Its external wall boasts a huge mosaic by the artist.

The town is also famous for its bubble-flecked glassware. The craft of the glassblowers can be seen (and purchased) at the **Verrerie de Biot**.

🏛 Musée Fernand Léger
255 chemin du Val-de-Pome. ***Tel*** *04 92 91 50 30.* ○ *Wed–Mon.* ● *Jan 1, May 1, Dec 25.* 📷 ♿ 🛍 ☕

🛍 La Verrerie de Biot
5 ch des Combes. ***Tel*** *04 93 65 03 00.*
○ *daily.* ● *Jan 1, Dec 25.* ♿ 🛍 🍴

Exterior of the Musée Fernand Léger in Biot, with a mural by the artist

Renoir's studio at the Musée Renoir, Les Collettes in Cagnes-sur-Mer

Cagnes-sur-Mer ㉜

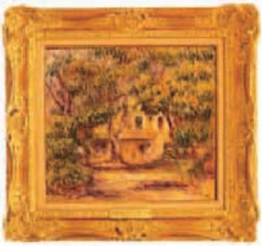
Alpes-Maritimes. 👪 *49,500.* 🚆
🚌 ℹ *6 bd Maréchal Juin*
(04 93 20 61 64). ⛺ *Tue–Fri.*
www.cagnes-tourisme.com

Cagnes-sur-Mer is divided into three districts. The oldest and most interesting is Haut-de-Cagnes, with its steep streets, covered passageways, and ancient buildings, including a number of Renaissance arcaded houses. The other districts are Cagnes-Ville, the modern town where hotels and stores are concentrated, and Cros-de-Cagnes, a seaside fishing resort and yachting harbor. The **Château Grimaldi** in Haut-de-Cagnes was built in the 14th century and reworked in the 17th by Henri Grimaldi. Behind the fortress walls is a shady courtyard. The surrounding marble columns conceal a museum devoted to the olive tree and a small collection of modern Mediterranean art. There is also a group of paintings bequeathed by *chanteuse* Suzy Solidor. The 40 works, all portraits of her, are by artists including Marie Laurencin and Cocteau. On the ceiling of the banqueting hall is a vast illusionistic fresco of the *Fall of Phaeton* attributed to Carlone in the 1620s.

The last 12 years of Pierre Auguste Renoir's life were spent in Cagnes, at the **Musée Renoir, Les Collettes**. The house has been kept almost exactly as it was when he died in 1919 and contains ten of his paintings. It is set in an olive grove, along with his great bronze *Venus Victrix*.

⌂ Château Grimaldi
Tel *04 92 02 47 30.* ○ *Dec–mid-Nov: Wed–Mon.* ● *Jan 1, May 1, mid-Nov–Dec 2, Dec 25.* 📷

🏛 Musée Renoir, Les Collettes
Tel *04 93 20 61 07.* ○ *Wed–Mon.* ● *Nov 1.* 📷 🛍



La Ferme des Collettes **(1915) by Renoir, in Cagnes-sur-Mer**

Gorges du Loup ㉝

Alpes-Maritimes. ✈ *Nice.* 🚆 *Cagnes-sur-Mer.* 🚌 *Grasse.* ⛴ *Nice.*
ℹ *Tourrettes-sur-Loup (04 93 24 18 93).* **www**.tourrettessurloup.com

The river Loup rises in the Pre-Alps behind Grasse and cuts a deep path down to the Mediterranean. Along its route are dramatic cascades and spectacular views. The superb countryside is crowned by the perched villages for which the region is famous.

Gourdon owes much of its appeal to its ancient houses, grouped round a 12th-century **Château** built on the site of a Saracen stronghold and perched dizzyingly on the cliffside. Its terraced gardens were laid out by Le Nôtre *(see p179)*. The museum houses a collection of naive art including a work by Henri Rousseau.

Tourrettes-sur-Loup is a fortified village in which the ramparts are formed by the outer houses. It is surrounded by fields of violets, for which it is famous, grown for use in perfume and candy.

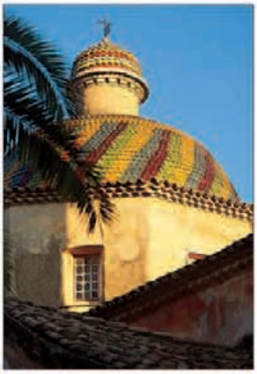
⌂ Château de Gourdon
Tel *04 93 09 68 02.* ○ *Jun–Sep: daily; Oct–May: Wed–Mon pm.* 📷 ♿ *restr.* **www**.chateau-gourdon.com

Vence ㉞

Alpes-Maritimes. 👥 *17,500.* 🚌
ℹ *pl du Grand Jardin (04 93 58 06 38).* 🛒 *Tue & Fri.*
www.vence.fr

Vence's gentle climate has always been its main attraction; today it is surrounded by vacation villas. It was an important religious center in the Middle Ages. The **Cathédrale** was restored by Vence's most famous bishop, Antoine Godeau. A 5th-century Roman sarcophagus serves as its altar and there are Carolingian wall carvings. Note, too, the 15th-century carved choir stalls and Godeau's tomb.

Just within the ramparts of the Old Town, which retains its 13th–14th-century town gates, is place du Peyra, once a Roman forum. Its urn-shaped fountain, built in 1822, still provides fresh water. On the edge of town, the **Chapelle du Rosaire** was built from 1947–51 and decorated by Henri Matisse, in gratitude to the nuns who nursed him during an illness. On its white walls, biblical scenes are reduced to simple black lines tinted by splashes of light from the blue and yellow stained-glass windows.



Domed roof in Vence

✝ Chapelle du Rosaire
466 av Henri Matisse. ***Tel*** *04 93 58 03 26.* ○ *Mon–Thu (Mon–Sat school hols).* ● *mid-Nov– mid-Dec, and public hols.* 📷 🛍

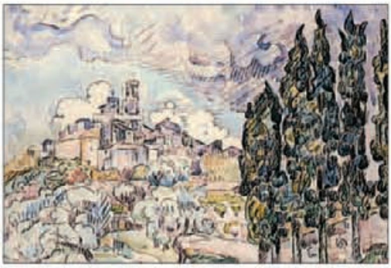
Market day in the Old Town of Vence

Street by Street: St-Paul-de-Vence ㉟

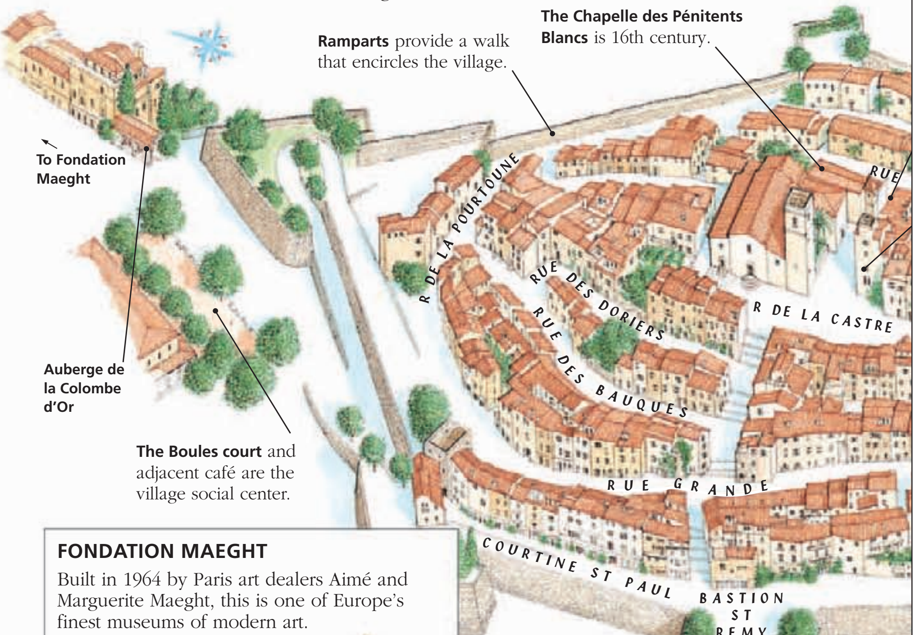
La Colombe d'Or

Restaurant sign, St-Paul-de-Vence

One of the most famous and visited hill villages of the Nice hinterland, St-Paul-de-Vence was once a French frontier post facing Savoy. Its 16th-century ramparts offer views over a landscape of cypress trees and red-roofed villas with palm trees and swimming pools. The village has been heavily restored but its winding streets and medieval buildings are authentic. It has proved a magnet for artists, both established and aspiring, throughout the 20th century. Today galleries and studios dominate the village.



View of St-Paul-de-Vence
The local landscape is a favorite subject for artists. Neo-Impressionist Paul Signac (1863–1935) painted this view of St-Paul.



The Chapelle des Pénitents Blancs is 16th century.

Ramparts provide a walk that encircles the village.

To Fondation Maeght

Auberge de la Colombe d'Or

The Boules court and adjacent café are the village social center.

FONDATION MAEGHT

Built in 1964 by Paris art dealers Aimé and Marguerite Maeght, this is one of Europe's finest museums of modern art. The striking pink and white building, set outside St-Paul, was designed by Catalan architect José-Luis Sert, who worked on it directly with artists such as Miró and Chagall. Inside are paintings by Bonnard, Braque, Kandinsky, Chagall, and others. There are also summer concerts, exhibitions, a library, and lectures. In the terraced gardens, sculptures, mobiles, and mosaics by Arp, Calder, Miró, Giacometti, and Hepworth are set amid the pine trees.

L'Homme qui Marche by Giacometti

The Colombe d'Or
This famous auberge includes a Léger mural (above) on the terrace, a Braque dove by the pool, a Picasso, and a Matisse in the dining room.

Eglise Collégiale
Begun in the 12th century, the church's treasures include a painting of St. Catherine, attributed to Tintoretto.

VISITORS' CHECKLIST

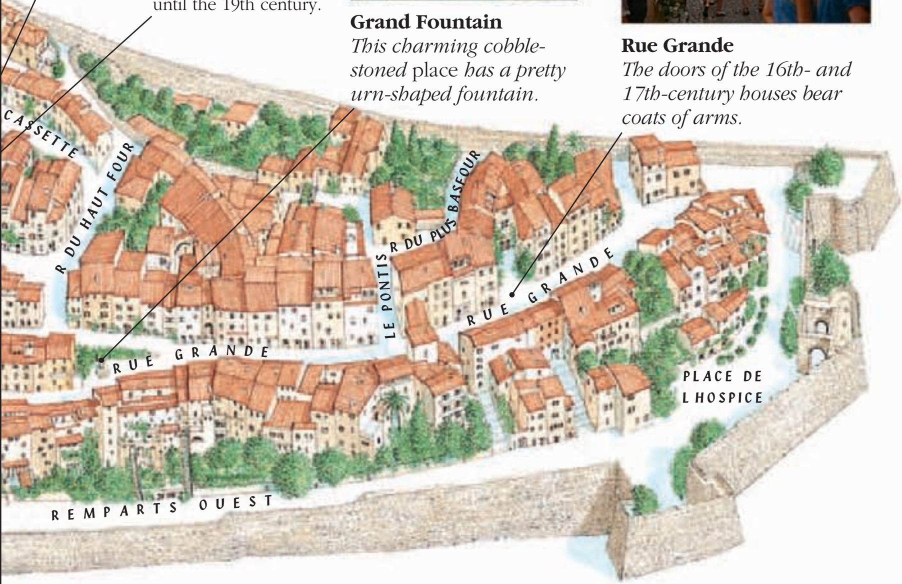
Alpes-Maritimes. 👥 *2,900.* 🚌 *840 ave Emile Hugues, Vence (04 93 58 37 60).* ℹ *2 rue Grande (04 93 32 86 95).* **www**.saint-pauldevence.com **Fondation Maeght** ***Tel*** *04 93 32 81 63.* **www**.fondation-maeght.com

The Musée d'Histoire de Saint-Paul has local waxwork scenes from the town's past.

Le Donjon, a grim medieval building, was used as a prison until the 19th century.

Grand Fountain
This charming cobblestoned place *has a pretty urn-shaped fountain.*

Rue Grande
The doors of the 16th- and 17th-century houses bear coats of arms.



CELEBRITY VILLAGE

The Colombe d'Or (Golden Dove) auberge *(see p574)* was popular with many of the artists and writers who flocked to the Riviera in the 1920s. Early patrons included Picasso, Soutine, Modigliani, Signac, Colette, and Cocteau. They often paid for their rooms and meals with paintings, resulting in the priceless collection that can be seen by diners today. The rich and famous have continued to come to St-Paul: Zelda and F. Scott Fitzgerald had a dramatic fight over Isadora Duncan at dinner here one night, and Yves Montand married Simone Signoret on the terrace. A photo display of celebrity visitors in St-Paul museum features Sartre and de Beauvoir, Greta Garbo, Sophia Loren, Burt Lancaster, and Catherine Deneuve.

Artist Marc Chagall (1887–1985), who moved to St-Paul-de-Vence in 1950

Nice ㊱

The largest resort on the Mediterranean coast and the fifth biggest city in France, with its second busiest airport, Nice was founded by the Greeks and colonized by the Romans. Its temperate winter climate and verdant subtropical vegetation have long attracted visitors. Until World War II it was favored by aristocrats, including Tsar Nicholas I's widow who visited in 1856 and Queen Victoria who stayed in 1895. This glittering past has contributed to Nice becoming capital of the Côte d'Azur, and today it is also a center for business conferences and package vacations. Nice has worthy museums, good beaches, and an atmospheric street life. Best of all is Carnival: 18 days of celebrations finishing on Shrove Tuesday in a fireworks display and the Battle of the Flowers *(see p39).*

Yachts at anchor in Nice harbor

Exploring Nice

The promenade des Anglais, running right along the seafront, was built in the 1830s with funds raised by the English colony. Today it is an eight-lane, 5-mile (8-km) highway, with galleries, stores, and grand hotels like the **Negresco**, reflecting Nice's prosperity.

Nice was Italian until 1860, and the pastel façades and balconies of the Old Town have a distinctly Italianate feel. It lies at the foot of a hill still known as the Château for the castle which once stood there. The district is largely restored and its tall, narrow buildings house artists and galleries, boutiques and restaurants. The daily flower market in the cours Saleya should not be missed.

The **Cimiez** district, on the hills overlooking the town, is the fashionable quarter of Nice. The old monastery of Notre-Dame-de-Cimiez is well worth a visit. Lower down the hillside are Les Arènes, remains of an extensive Roman settlement with vestiges of the great baths and an amphitheater. Excavated artifacts are on show at the archeological museum, next to the Musée Matisse. At the foot of the Cimiez hill is the **Musée Chagall**.

Discover Nice by night on a guided tramway tour. The circuit takes in 14 works of art by some of the most celebrated creators of the contemporary art scene. Tickets can be reserved in advance at the tourist office.

🏛 Musée Matisse

164 av des Arènes de Cimiez.
Tel *04 93 81 08 08.* ○ *Wed–Mon.* ● *some public hols.* ♿ 🛍
www.musee-matisse-nice.org

Inspired by the Mediterranean light, Matisse spent many years in Nice. The museum, housed in and below the 17th-century Arena Villa, displays drawings, paintings, bronzes, fabrics, and artifacts. Highlights include *Still Life With Pomegranates* and his last completed work, *Flowers and Fruits.*

Nice's Old Quarter

🏛 Palais Lascaris

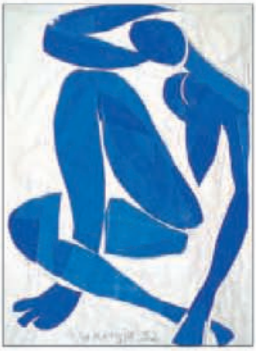
15 rue Droite. ***Tel*** *04 93 62 72 40.* ○ *Wed–Mon.* ● *some public hols.*

This stuccoed 17th-century palace is decorated with ornate woodwork, Flemish tapestries, and illusionistic ceilings thought to be by Carlone. Its small but delightful collection includes a reconstruction of an 18th-century apothecary's store.

🏛 Musée d'Art Moderne et d'Art Contemporain

Promenade des Arts. ***Tel*** *04 97 13 42 01.* ○ *Tue–Sun.* ● *Jan 1, Easter, May 1, Dec 25.* ♿ 🛍
www.mamac-nice.org

The museum occupies a strikingly original complex of four marble-faced towers linked by glass passageways. The collection is particularly strong in Neo-Realism and Pop Art, with works by Andy Warhol, Jean Tinguely, and Niki de Saint-Phalle. Also well-represented are such Ecole de Nice artists as César, Arman, and Yves Klein.


Blue Nude IV **(1952) by Henri Matisse**

An azure view – relaxing on the promenade des Anglais

VISITORS' CHECKLIST

Alpes-Maritimes. 👥 *349,000.* ✈ *4.5 miles (7 km) SW.* 🚆 *av Thiers (36 35).* 🚌 *5 bd Jean Jaurès (04 93 85 61 81).* ⛴ *quai du Commerce (3260).* ℹ *5 prom des Anglais (08 92 70 74 07).* 🛒 *Tue–Sun.* 🎭 *Carnival.* **www**.nicetourism.com

Cathédrale Ste-Réparate

This 17th-century Baroque building is surmounted by a handsome tiled dome. Its interior is lavishly decorated with plasterwork, marble, and original paneling.

Musée Chagall

36 av du Docteur Ménard. ***Tel*** *04 93 53 87 20.* ○ *Wed–Mon.* ● *Jan 1, May 1, Dec 25.* 🎫 ♿ 🎧 🛍 ☕

This is the largest collection of works by Marc Chagall, with paintings, drawings, sculpture, stained glass, and mosaics. Best of all are the 17 canvases of the artist's *Biblical Message*.

Musée des Beaux-Arts

33 av des Baumettes. ***Tel*** *04 92 15 28 28.* ○ *Tue–Sun.* ● *Jan 1, Easter, May 1, Dec 25.* ♿ *restr.* 🎧 *Thu.* 🛍

The 19th-century home of a Ukrainian princess displays works sent to Nice by Napoleon III after Italy ceded the city to France in 1860, as well as paintings by Impressionists and Post-Impressionists, such as Renoir, Monet, and Dufy.

Palais Masséna

65 rue de France. ***Tel*** *04 93 91 19 10.* ○ *Wed–Mon.* ♿ 🛍

Housed in a 19th-century Italianate villa, the Palais Masséna exhibits trace the history of Nice from 1800 to the 1930s.

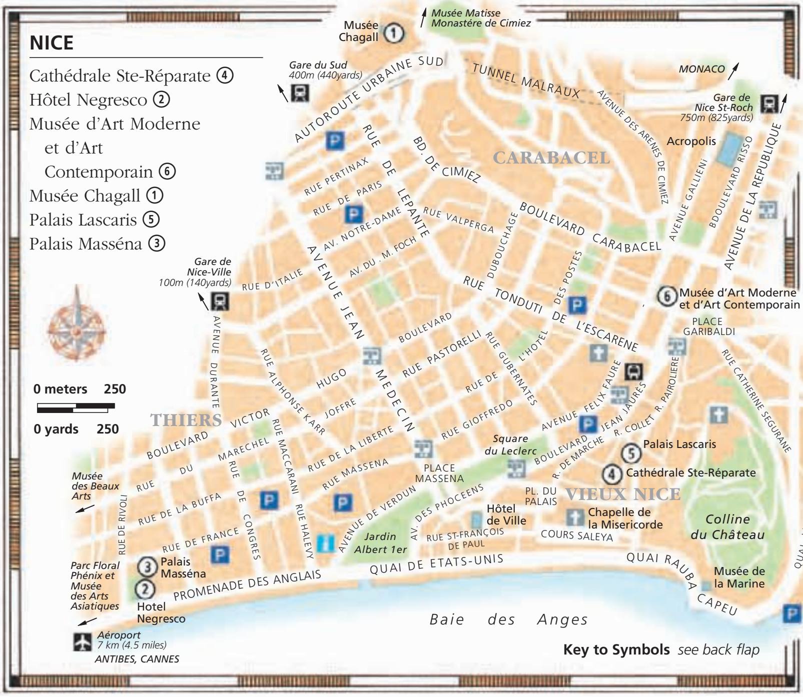
Cathédrale Orthodoxe Russe St-Nicolas

Completed in 1912, the cathedral was built in memory of a young Tsarevitch who died of consumption here in 1865. The exterior is of pink brick and gray marble with elaborate mosaics. The interior is resplendent with icons and fine woodwork.

Musée des Arts Asiatiques

405 prom des Anglais. ***Tel*** *04 92 29 37 00.* ○ *Wed–Mon.* ● *Jan 1, May 1, Dec 25.* ♿ ☕ 🛍

Exhibits of ancient and contemporary art from across Asia, in Kenzo Tange's uncluttered white marble and glass setting.


NICE
Cathédrale Ste-Réparate ④
Hôtel Negresco ②
Musée d'Art Moderne et d'Art Contemporain ⑥
Musée Chagall ①
Palais Lascaris ⑤
Palais Masséna ③
Musée Chagall ①
Musée Matisse Monastère de Cimiez
Gare du Sud 400m (440yards)
AUTOROUTE URBAINE SUD
TUNNEL MALRAUX
MONACO
Gare de Nice St-Roch 750m (825yards)
AVENUE DES ARENES DE CIMIEZ
Acropolis
CARABACEL
RUE PERTINAX
RUE DE PARIS
RUE DE LEPANTE
BD. DE CIMIEZ
RUE VALPERGA
AV. NOTRE-DAME
AV. DU M. FOCH
BOULEVARD CARABACEL
AVENUE GALLIENI
BOULEVARD RISSO
AVENUE DE LA REPUBLIQUE
DUBOUCHAGE
DES POSTES
RUE TONDUTI DE L'ESCARENE
Musée d'Art Moderne et d'Art Contemporain ⑥
PLACE GARIBALDI
Gare de Nice-Ville 100m (140yards)
RUE D'ITALIE
AVENUE JEAN MEDECIN
AVENUE DURANTE
BOULEVARD
RUE PASTORELLI
RUE GUBERNATES
RUE DE L'HOTEL
RUE ALPHONSE KARR
HUGO
JOFFRE
VICTOR
THIERS
BOULEVARD DU MARECHEL
RUE DE LA LIBERTE
RUE GIOFFREDO
AVENUE FELIX FAURE
JEAN JAURES
R. COLLET
R. PAIROLIERE
RUE CATHERINE SEGURANE
Square du Leclerc
BOULEVARD R. DE MARCHE
Palais Lascaris ⑤
Cathédrale Ste-Réparate ④
RUE MACCARANI
RUE MASSENA
PLACE MASSENA
PL. DU PALAIS
VIEUX NICE
Musée des Beaux Arts
RUE DE LA BUFFA
RUE DE CONGRES
RUE HALEVY
AVENUE DE VERDUN
AV. DES PHOCEENS
Hôtel de Ville
Chapelle de la Misericorde
Colline du Château
RUE DE RIVOLI
RUE DE FRANCE
Jardin Albert 1er
RUE ST-FRANÇOIS DE PAUL
COURS SALEYA
QUAI PAPACINO
QUAI LUNEL
Parc Floral Phénix et Musée des Arts Asiatiques
③ Palais Masséna
② Hotel Negresco
PROMENADE DES ANGLAIS
QUAI DE ETATS-UNIS
QUAI RAUBA CAPEU
Musée de la Marine
Baie des Anges
Aéroport 7 km (4.5 miles)
ANTIBES, CANNES
0 meters 250
0 yards 250
Key to Symbols see back flap

Chapelle de St-Pierre, Villefranche

Villefranche-sur-Mer ㊲

Alpes-Maritimes. 👥 *6,649.* 🚆 🚌 ℹ *Jardin François Binon (04 93 01 73 68).* ⛀ *Sat & Sun.* **www**.villefranche-sur-mer.com

One of the most perfectly situated towns on the coast, Villefranche lies at the foot of hills forming a sheltered amphitheater. The town overlooks a beautiful natural harbor, which is deep enough to be a naval port of call.

The bright and animated waterfront is lined by Italianate façades, with cafés and bars from which to watch the fishermen. Here, too, is the medieval **Chapelle de St-Pierre**, which, after years of service storing fishing nets, was restored in 1957 and decorated by Jean Cocteau. His frescoes depict non-religious images and the life of St. Peter.

Also worth a visit is the 16th-century **Citadelle St-Elme**, incorporating the town hall and two art galleries.

Behind the harbor, the streets are narrow, winding, and often stepped. Walking through them, you get the odd glimpse of the harbor. The vaulted 13th-century rue Obscure has always provided shelter from bombardment, right up to World War II.

✝ **Chapelle de St-Pierre**
Quai Amiral Courbet. ***Tel*** *04 93 76 90 70.* ○ *mid-Dec–mid-Nov: Tue–Sun.* ● *Dec 25.* ♿

Cap Ferrat ㊳

Alpes-Maritimes. 👥 *2,000.* ✈ *Nice.* ⛴ *Nice.* 🚆 *Beaulieu-sur-Mer.* 🚌 ℹ *59 av Denis Femeria (04 93 76 08 90).* **www**.saintjeancapferrat.fr

The peninsula of Cap Ferrat boasts some of the most sumptuous villas found on the Riviera. From 1926 until the author's death, the best-known was Somerset Maugham's Villa Mauresque, where he received celebrities from Noël Coward to Winston Churchill.

High walls shield most of the exclusive villas, but possibly the best one is open to the public. The **Villa Ephrussi de Rothschild** is a terra cotta and marble mansion set in themed gardens on the crest of the cape. It belonged to the Baroness Ephrussi de Rothschild, who bequeathed it to the Institut de France in 1934. It is furnished as she left it, with her collections of priceless porcelain, items that belonged to Marie Antoinette, and a unique collection of drawings by Fragonard.

The town of **Beaulieu** lies where the cape joins the mainland. A pleasant marina with an exceptionally mild climate and very fine hotels, it is the site of another unique house, the extraordinary **Villa Kerylos**. Built between 1902 and 1908 for archeologist Theodore Reinach in imitation of an ancient Greek residence, it contains lovingly reproduced mosaics, frescoes, and furniture.

🏛 **Villa Ephrussi de Rothschild**
Cap Ferrat. ***Tel*** *04 93 01 33 09.* ○ *Feb–Oct: daily; Nov–Jan: Mon–Fri pms, w/e & school & public hols: daily.* ♿ ✋ ☕ 🛍
www.villa-ephrussi.com

🏛 **Villa Kerylos**
Imp Gustave Eiffel, Beaulieu. ***Tel*** *04 93 01 01 44.* ○ *as above.* ♿ ✋ 🛍
www.villa-kerylos.com

Greek-style Villa Kerylos at Beaulieu on Cap Ferrat

Louis XV salon at the Villa Ephrussi de Rothschild, Cap Ferrat

Eze ㊴

Alpes-Maritimes. 👥 *3,100.* 🚆 🚌
ℹ *pl Général de Gaulle (04 93 41 26 00).* **www**.eze-riviera.com

For many, Eze is the ultimate perched village, balancing on a rocky pinnacle high above the Mediterranean. Every summer, thousands of visitors stream through the 14th-century fortified gate and throng the narrow streets. The flower-decked buildings are almost all stores, galleries, and craft workshops. At the top of the village, the château is surrounded by the lush tropical plants of the **Jardin Exotique**. The view from here is superb.

Farther along the Upper Corniche is the Roman Alpine Trophy **La Turbie** *(see pp46–7)*. This vast 6 BC structure dominates the surrounding village, with magnificent views towards Monaco and Italy.

🍁 **Jardin Exotique**
Rue du Château. ***Tel*** *04 93 41 10 30.* ○ *daily.* ● *Dec 25.* 🪙

∩ **La Turbie**
○ *Apr–mid-Sep: daily; mid-Sep–Mar: Tue–Sun.* ● *public hols.* 🪙 ☞ 🛍

Roquebrune-Cap-Martin ㊵

Alpes-Maritimes. 👥 *12,000.* ✈ *Nice.* 🚆 🚌 ℹ *218 av Aristide Briand (04 93 35 62 87).* ⊖ *Wed.*
www.roquebrune-cap-martin.com

The medieval village of Roquebrune overlooks the wooded cape where the villas of the rich and famous still abound. Visitors here have included Coco Chanel and Greta Garbo. The cape has not always been kind – poet W.B. Yeats died here in 1939 and architect Le Corbusier was drowned off the coast in 1965.

In 1467 Roquebrune believed that by performing scenes from the Passion it escaped the plague, and every August it continues this tradition.

View from Roquebrune

Alpes-Maritimes ㊶

Alpes-Maritimes. ✈ *Nice.* 🚆 *Nice.* 🚌 *Peille.* ⛴ *Nice.* ℹ *La Mairie, Peille (04 93 91 71 71).* **www**.peille.fr

In the hinterland of the Côte d'Azur, it is still possible to find quiet, unspoiled villages off the tourist track. The tiny twin villages of **Peille** and **Peillon** are typical. Both have changed little since the Middle Ages, perched on outcrops over the Paillon river, their streets a mass of steps and arches. Peille, the more remote, even has its own dialect. The Alpes-Maritimes countryside is also unspoiled, its craggy gorges, tumbling rivers, and windswept plateaus just a few hours from the coast. Of note are the ancient rock carvings of the **Vallée des Merveilles** and rare wildlife in the **Parc National du Mercantour**.

Menton ㊷

Alpes-Maritimes. 👥 *30,000.* 🚆 🚌
ℹ *Palais de l'Europe, 8 av Boyer (04 92 41 76 76).* ⊖ *daily.*
www.menton.fr

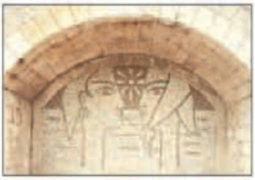
Menton's beaches, with the Alps and the golden buildings and Belle Epoque villas of the Old Town as a backdrop, would be enough to lure most visitors. In the 19th century, Queen Victoria and famous writers and poets often vacationed here. Tropical gardens and citrus fruits thrive in the town's perfect climate, mild even in February for the lemon festival *(see p39)*.

The **Basilica St-Michel** is a superb example of Baroque architecture in yellow and pink stone. The square before it is paved with a mosaic of the Grimaldi coat of arms. The **Salle des Mariages** in the Hôtel de Ville was decorated in 1957 by Jean Cocteau. Drawings, paintings, ceramics, and stage designs by the renowned artist are displayed in the **Musée Jean Cocteau**, housed in a 17th-century fort. Inside the Palais Carnolès, the **Musée des Beaux-Arts** features works from the Middle Ages to the 20th century.

🏛 **Salle des Mariages**
Hôtel de Ville. ***Tel*** *04 92 10 50 00.*
○ *Mon–Fri.* ● *public hols.* 🪙

🏛 **Musée Jean Cocteau**
Vieux Port. ***Tel*** *04 93 57 72 30.*
○ *Wed–Mon.* ● *public hols.* 🪙

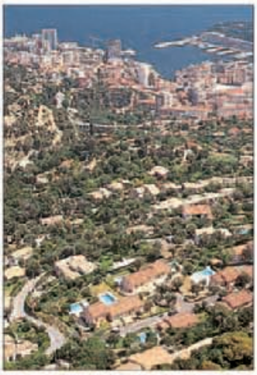
🏛 **Musée des Beaux-Arts**
3 av de la Madone. ***Tel*** *04 93 35 49 71.* ○ *Wed–Mon.* ● *public hols.*



Mosaic at the Musée Jean Cocteau in Menton

Monaco ㊸

Travelers to Monaco by car would do well to take the Moyenne Corniche, one of the most beautiful highways in the world, with incomparable views of the Mediterranean coastline. Arriving among the skyscrapers of Monaco today, it is hard to envisage the turbulence of its history. At first a Greek settlement, later taken by the Romans, it was bought from the Genoese in 1297 by the Grimaldis who, in spite of bitter family feuds and at least one political assassination, still rule as the world's oldest ruling dynasty. Monaco covers 0.74 sq miles (1.9 sq km) and, although its size has increased by one-third in the form of landfills, it still occupies an area smaller than that of New York's Central Park.


Aerial view of Monaco

Grand Casino

Exploring Monaco

Monaco owes its renown principally to its Grand Casino. Source of countless legends, it was instituted in 1878 by Charles III to save himself from bankruptcy. The first casino was opened in 1865 on a barren promontory (later named Monte-Carlo in his honor) across the harbor from ancient Monaco-Ville. So successful was Charles's money-making venture that, by 1870, he was able to abolish taxation for his people. Today, Monaco is a tax haven for thousands, and its residents have the highest per capita income in the world.

Visitors come from all over the world for the Grand Prix de Monaco in May and the Monte-Carlo Rally in January *(see p39)*. Many of the greatest singers perform in the opera season. There is a fireworks festival (July–August), and an international circus festival at the end of January as well as world-class ballet and concerts. Facilities exist for every sort of leisure activity, and there is much else to enjoy without breaking the bank, including **Fort Antoine** and the neo-Romanesque **Cathédrale**.

Grand Casino

Place du Casino. ***Tel*** *00 377 92 16 20 20.* ○ *daily, from noon.* ♿ **www**.montecarloresort.com

Designed in 1878 by Charles Garnier, architect of the Paris Opéra *(see p97)*, and set in formal gardens, the Casino gives a splendid view over Monaco. The lavish interior is still decorated in Belle Epoque style, recalling an era when this was the rendezvous of Russian Grand Dukes. Anyone can play the odds on the one-armed bandits of the Salon Blanc or the roulette wheels of the Salons Européens. Even the most exclusive of the gaming rooms can be visited at a price, but their tables are for the big spenders only.

Palais Princier

Place du Palais. ***Tel*** *00 377 93 25 18 31.* ○ *Apr–Nov: daily.* 🎫

Monaco-Ville, the seat of government, is the site of the 13th-century Palais Princier. The interior, with its priceless furniture and carpets and its

Skyscrapers and apartment blocks of modern Monte-Carlo

MONACO'S ROYAL FAMILY

Prince Albert II officially assumed the Monaco throne in July 2005, three months after his father died, aged 81, ending a reign of over 55 years. Prince Rainier III was an effective ruler, descended from a Grimaldi who entered the Monaco fortress in 1297. His wife, former film star Grace Kelly, died tragically in 1982. Prince Albert and his sisters, Caroline and Stephanie, remain a focus of media attention.

Prince Rainier III, Princess Grace and Princess Caroline

VISITORS' CHECKLIST

Monaco. 👥 *37,000.* ✈ *4.5 miles (7 km) SW Nice.* 🚉 *av Prince Pierre (SNCF: 36 35).* ℹ *2a bd des Moulins (00 377 92 16 61 66).* 🛒 *daily.* 🎪 *Festival du Cirque (Jan–Feb); International Fireworks Festival (Jul–Aug); Fête Nationale Monégasque (19 Nov).* **www**.visitmonaco.com

magnificent frescoes, is only open to the public in the summer. The changing of the guard is at 11:55am.

Musée des Souvenirs Napoléoniens et Archives Historiques du Palais

Pl du Palais. ***Tel*** *00 377 93 25 18 31.* ○ *Apr–Nov: daily; Dec–Mar: Tue–Sun.* ● *Jan 1, May 1, Grand Prix, Nov, Dec 25.* 🎫

A genealogical tree on the wall traces the family links between the Grimaldis and Bonapartes. Also on show are Napoleon's personal effects and numerous portraits.

Guard outside the Palais Princier

Musée Océanographique

Av Saint-Martin. ***Tel*** *00 377 93 15 36 00.* ○ *daily.* 🎫 ♿ 🍴 🛍

This museum was founded in 1910 by Prince Albert I, using his casino profits. Its aquarium, fed with sea water, holds rare species of marine plants and animals. The museum houses an important scientific collection, diving equipment, and model ships. Marine explorer Jacques Cousteau established his research center here.

Jardin Exotique

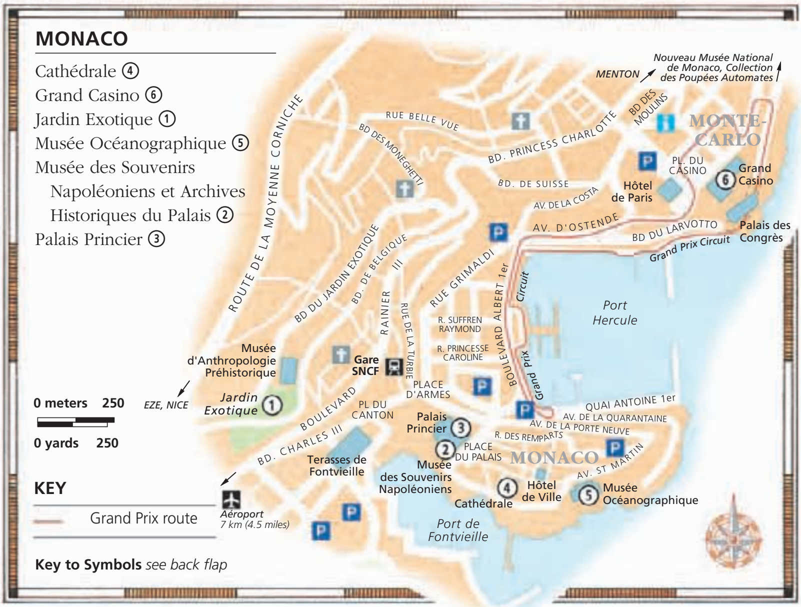
62 bd du Jardin Exotique. ***Tel*** *00 377 93 15 29 80.* ○ *daily.* ● *Nov 19, Dec 25.* 🎫 🛍 **www**.jardin-exotique.mc

These gardens are considered to be the finest in Europe, with a huge range of tropical and subtropical plants. A museum of anthropology offers evidence of mammoths once living on the coast here.

Nouveau Musée National de Monaco, Collection des Poupées Automates

17 av Princesse Grace. ***Tel*** *00 377 98 98 91 26.* ○ *daily.* ● *Jan 1, May 1, Grand Prix, Nov 19, Dec 25.* 🎫 ♿ 🛍

This museum houses over 400 dolls from the 18th and 19th centuries. The delightful automata are set in motion several times each day.


MONACO
Cathédrale ④
Grand Casino ⑥
Jardin Exotique ①
Musée Océanographique ⑤
Musée des Souvenirs Napoléoniens et Archives Historiques du Palais ②
Palais Princier ③
0 meters 250
0 yards 250
KEY
Grand Prix route
Key to Symbols see back flap
MENTON
Nouveau Musée National de Monaco, Collection des Poupées Automates
MONTE-CARLO
BD DES MOULINS
PL. DU CASINO
Grand Casino
Hôtel de Paris
Palais des Congrès
BD DU LARVOTTO
Grand Prix Circuit
AV. D'OSTENDE
AV. DE LA COSTA
BD. DE SUISSE
BD. PRINCESS CHARLOTTE
RUE BELLE VUE
BD DES MONEGHETTI
ROUTE DE LA MOYENNE CORNICHE
BD DU JARDIN EXOTIQUE
BD. DE BELGIQUE
RAINIER III
RUE DE LA TURBIE
RUE GRIMALDI
BOULEVARD ALBERT 1er
R. SUFFREN RAYMOND
R. PRINCESSE CAROLINE
Grand Prix Circuit
Port Hercule
Musée d'Anthropologie Préhistorique
Gare SNCF
Jardin Exotique
EZE, NICE
PLACE D'ARMES
PL DU CANTON
BOULEVARD
BD. CHARLES III
Palais Princier
QUAI ANTOINE 1er
AV. DE LA QUARANTAINE
AV. DE LA PORTE NEUVE
R. DES REMPARTS
PLACE DU PALAIS
MONACO
AV. ST MARTIN
Terasses de Fontvieille
Musée des Souvenirs Napoléoniens
Cathédrale
Hôtel de Ville
Musée Océanographique
Aéroport 7 km (4.5 miles)
Port de Fontvieille

CORSICA

HAUTE-CORSE · CORSE-DU-SUD

Corsica, where the people speak their own language, has all the attributes of a mini-continent. There are tropical palm trees, vineyards, olive and orange groves, forests of chestnut and indigenous pine, alpine lakes, and cool mountain torrents filled with trout. Most distinctive of all is the parched maquis (scrub), heavy with the scent of myrtle, which Napoleon swore he could smell from Elba.

The fourth largest island in the Mediterranean after Sicily, Sardinia, and Cyprus, Corsica has been a problem and a bafflement to mainland France ever since 1769, when it was "sold" to Louis XV by the Genoese for 40 million francs. Before that, following years of struggle, the Corsican people had enjoyed 14 years of independence under the revered leadership of Pasquale Paoli. They understandably felt cheated by the deal with the French, and have resented them ever since. To vacationers visiting the island – in July and August tourists outnumber the inhabitants six to one – the Corsican–French relationship may be a matter of indifference. However, there is a strong (and sometimes quite violent) separatist movement, which does deter some tourists. As a result, Corsica's wild beauty has been preserved to an extent not seen in the rest of the Mediterranean.

For 200 years, from the 11th to the 13th century, Corsica was a colony of the old Tuscan republic of Pisa, whose builders founded beautifully proportioned Romanesque churches. These buildings are, along with the megalithic stone warriors in Filitosa, the noblest monuments to be seen here. For the rest, the birthplace of Napoleon is a place of wild seacoasts and mountain peaks, one of the last unspoiled corners of the Mediterranean: poor, depopulated, beautiful, old-fashioned, and doggedly aloof.

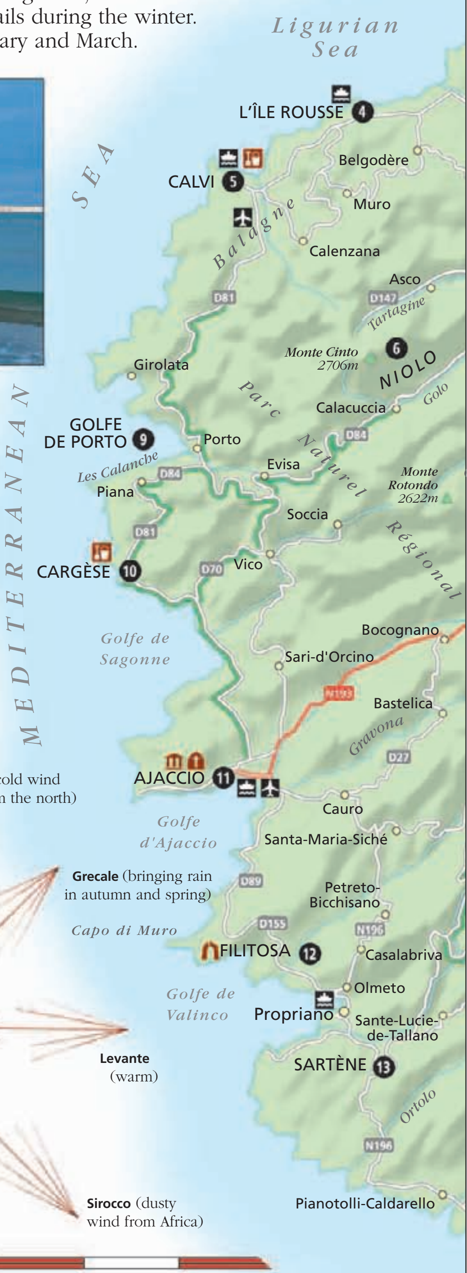
The village of Oletta in the Nebbio region around St-Florent

◁ **A fisherman with feline friends in Bastia**

Exploring Corsica

Corsica's main appeal is its scenery: a wildly beautiful landscape of mountains, forests, myrtle-scented maquis, and countless miles of sandy beaches. Late spring (when the wild flowers are in bloom) and early fall are the best times to visit – the temperature is moderate and there aren't too many visitors. The island is renowned for its superb hiking trails, some of which become cross-country skiing trails during the winter. Downhill skiing is also possible in February and March.

Calvi's port and 15th-century citadel

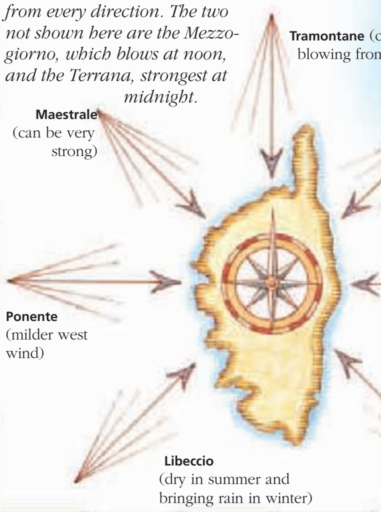

Ligurian Sea
L'ÎLE ROUSSE 4
Belgodère
CALVI 5
Muro
Balagne
Calenzana
Asco
D81
D147
Tartagine
Monte Cinto 2706m
6
NIOLO
Girolata
Parc
Calacuccia
Golo
GOLFE DE PORTO 9
Porto
Naturel
D84
Evisa
Les Calanche
D84
Piana
Monte Rotondo 2622m
Soccia
Régional
D81
CARGÈSE 10
D70
Vico
SEA
MEDITERRANEAN
Golfe de Sagonne
Bocognano
Sari-d'Orcino
N193
Bastelica
Gravona
D27
AJACCIO 11
Cauro
Golfe d'Ajaccio
Santa-Maria-Siché
D89
Petreto-Bicchisano
Capo di Muro
D155
N196
FILITOSA 12
Casalabriva
Olmeto
Golfe de Valinco
Propriano
Sante-Lucie-de-Tallano
SARTÈNE 13
Ortolo
N196
Pianotolli-Caldarello

KEY

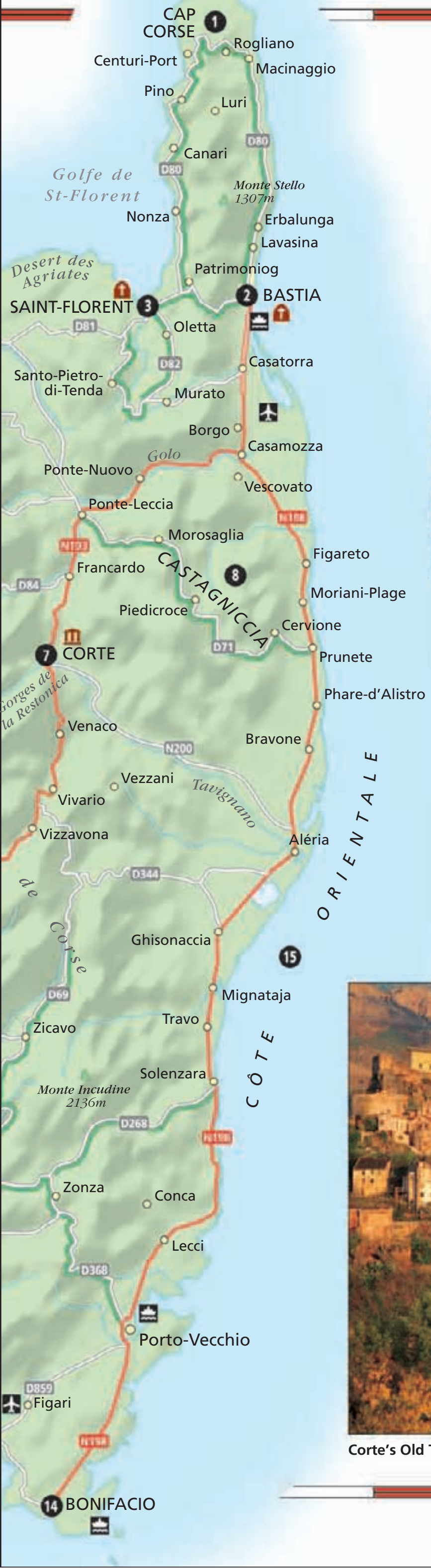
- Major road
- Secondary road
- Minor road
- Scenic route
- ▲ Summit

WINDS OF CORSICA

The island is affected by winds from every direction. The two not shown here are the Mezzogiorno, which blows at noon, and the Terrana, strongest at midnight.


Tramontane (cold wind blowing from the north)
Maestrale (can be very strong)
Grecale (bringing rain in autumn and spring)
Ponente (milder west wind)
Levante (warm)
Libeccio (dry in summer and bringing rain in winter)
Sirocco (dusty wind from Africa)

For additional map symbols *see back flap*


CAP CORSE ①
Centuri-Port
Rogliano
Macinaggio
Pino
Luri
D80
Canari
D80
Golfe de St-Florent
Monte Stello 1307m
Nonza
Erbalunga
Lavasina
Desert des Agriates
Patrimoniog
② BASTIA
SAINT-FLORENT ③
D81
Oletta
Casatorra
D82
Santo-Pietro-di-Tenda
Murato
Borgo
Casamozza
Golo
Ponte-Nuovo
Vescovato
Ponte-Leccia
N198
Morosaglia
N193
Figareto
Francardo
⑧
CASTAGNICCIA
D84
Moriani-Plage
Piedicroce
Cervione
D71
⑦ CORTE
Prunete
Gorges de la Restonica
Phare-d'Alistro
Venaco
N200
Bravone
Vezzani
Tavignano
Vivario
Vizzavona
Aléria
D344
de
Corse
ORIENTALE
Ghisonaccia
⑮
Mignataja
D69
Travo
Zicavo
Solenzara
CÔTE
Monte Incudine 2136m
D268
N198
Zonza
Conca
Lecci
D368
Porto-Vecchio
D859
Figari
N198
⑭ BONIFACIO

SIGHTS AT A GLANCE

- Ajaccio ⑪
- Bastia ②
- Bonifacio ⑭
- Calvi ⑤
- Cap Corse ①
- Cargèse ⑩
- The Castagniccia ⑧
- Corte ⑦
- Côte Orientale ⑮
- Filitosa ⑫
- Golfe de Porto ⑨
- L'Île Rousse ④
- The Niolo ⑥
- St-Florent ③
- Sartène ⑬

The Calanche cliffs in the Golfe de Porto

GETTING AROUND

Car ferries (which should be reserved well in advance) depart from Marseille, Nice, and Toulon, arriving at Bastia, L'Île Rousse, Calvi, Ajaccio, Propriano, and Porto-Vecchio. There are also ferries from Sardinia to Bonifacio, and from Genoa, Livorno, and La Spezia to Bastia. Small airports are at Ajaccio, Bastia, Calvi, and Figari. Corsica's roads are narrow, twisting, and often tortuously slow, though breathtaking views reward the effort. A car is a must for exploring the island, since public transportation is limited. Carry spare gas – gas stations are few and far between.

0 kilometers 20

0 miles 10

Corte's Old Town, with its citadel high up on a rocky outcrop

Cap Corse ❶

Haute-Corse. ✈ *Bastia.* 🚌 *Bastia.*
⛴ *Bastia.* ℹ *pl St-Nicolas, Bastia*
(04 95 54 20 40). **www**.corsica.net

Cap Corse is the northern tip of Corsica, 25 miles (40 km) in length but seldom more than 7.5 miles (12 km) wide, pointing like an accusatory finger toward Genoa.

There are two roads out of Bastia to the cape: the D81 leading west across the mountains and joining up with the D80 after the wine village of Patrimonio; and the D80 traveling north along the eastern shore to **Erbalunga** and **Macinaggio**. The road is narrow and twisting, a taste of what awaits you in Corsica.

From the coastal village of **Lavasina**, the D54 leads left off the D80 to Pozzo; from here it is a 5-hour round trip on foot to the 4,300-ft (1,307-m) summit of **Monte Stello**, the highest peak on the cape. The 360-degree view from the top takes in St-Florent to the west, the massif of central Corsica to the south, and the Italian island of Elba to the east.

Farther up the coast, the restored **Tour de Losse** is one of many 16th-century Genoese towers along the coast – part of an elaborate system which enabled all Corsican towns to be warned within two hours of impending barbarian raids.

The charming 18th-century fishing port of **Centuri**, near the tip of the peninsula on the west coast, is an ideal spot for a delicious seafood feast. **Pino**, a pretty little village straggling down the green mountainside farther to the south, has no hotel, only a lovely little church dedicated to the Virgin, full of model ships placed there by mariners grateful for her protection.

On the way south along the vertiginous lower corniche, be sure to turn left up the hill to **Canari**. One of the larger villages in this area, Canari has a jewel of a 12th-century Pisan church, Santa Maria Assunta, a magnificent view across the sea, and a thoroughly convivial hotel-restaurant. All the byroads in this thickly wooded area seem to lead somewhere interesting. There are literally dozens of picturesque hamlets in the vicinity, and it should be borne in mind that from this point onward the landscape becomes steadily less attractive as the road winds on past the old asbestos workings and beaches of black sand below the village of **Nonza**.

The village of Erbalunga on the east coast of Cap Corse

Bastia's Vieux Port seen from the Jetée du Dragon

Bastia ❷

Haute-Corse. 👥 *39,000.* ✈ 🚆
🚌 ⛴ ℹ *pl St-Nicolas*
(04 95 54 20 40). ⊖ *Tue–Sun.*
www.bastia-tourisme.com

A thriving port and the administrative capital of Upper Corsica, Bastia is utterly different in style from its sedate west coast rival, Ajaccio. The Genoese citadel and colorful 19th-century Italianate buildings around the old port are for many people their first taste of the authentic Mediterranean – as it was half a century ago, and as it stubbornly remains in our imagination.

The center of Bastia's life is the **place St-Nicolas**, facing the wharf where ferries from the mainland and Italy arrive. Heading south along the waterfront you come to the **place de l'Hôtel de Ville**, site of a daily food market. Bordering the square are the early 17th-century **Chapelle de l'Immaculée Conception**, with its ornate 18th-century interior, and the mid-17th-century **Eglise de St-Jean-Baptiste**, whose façade dominates the Vieux Port.

From here it is a short walk up to the 16th-century **citadel**, where there are two more churches worth seeing: the Rococo **Chapelle Sainte-Croix**, with its striking *Black Christ*, fished out of the sea by Bastiais fishermen in 1428; and the 15th-century **Sainte-Marie**, which has a *Virgin* made of a ton of solid silver.

St-Florent ❸

Haute-Corse. 👥 *1,500.* 🚌 ℹ *Bâtiment Administratif (04 95 37 06 04).* 🛒 *1st Wed of month.*

St-Florent is almost a Corsican St-Tropez – chic, affluent, and packed with yachts from all over the Mediterranean. Its citadel, which houses photography exhibitions, dates from 1439, and is a fine example of Genoese military architecture. The town itself is pleasant to wander around; its main attraction, the 12th-century Pisan **Cathédrale de Santa Maria Assunta**, lies just inland on the road to Poggio-d'Oletta.

Environs
A leisurely 4-hour circuit by car of the **Nebbio** region, which extends in an amphitheater around St-Florent, might take in the following: **Santo Pietro di Tenda**; **Murato**, famous for its magnificent **Eglise de San Michele de Murato**, a 12th-century Pisan Romanesque construction built of white and green stone; the **San Stefano** pass, with the sea on either side; **Oletta**, which produces a special blue cheese made from ewes' milk; the **Teghime** pass; and finally the wine village of **Patrimonio**, where there is a strange, big-eared menhir dating from 900–800 BC.

Along the coast to the west of St-Florent lies the barren, uninhabited **Désert des Agriates**. If you can face the 6-mile (10-km) haul to the sea – on foot, by bike, or by motorbike – the Saleccia beach is the most beautiful on the island.

San Michele de Murato

L'Île Rousse ❹

Haute-Corse. 👥 *3,000.* 🚆 🚌 ⛴ ℹ *av Calizzi (04 95 60 04 35).* 🛒 *daily.* **www**.balagne-corsica.com

Founded in 1758 by Pasquale Paoli, leader of independent Corsica, L'Île Rousse is today a major vacation resort and ferry terminal. The center of town is the plane-shaded place Paoli, dominated by a marble statue of Corsica's national hero. On the north side of the square is the covered market, with the Old Town just beyond.

In the summer months L'Île Rousse becomes hideously overcrowded, its beaches a mass of sun-starved bodies. It is worth traveling 6 miles (10 km) up the coast to **Lozari**, which offers a magnificent, virtually unspoiled stretch of sand.

Environs
One very pleasant way to discover the **Balagne** region is to take the tram-train from L'Île Rousse to Calvi and back. This odd little service runs all year (more frequent in summer), roughly keeping to the coastline and stopping at Algajola, Lumio, and various villages along the way.

Calvi ❺

Haute-Corse. 👥 *5,500.* 🚆 🚌 ⛴ ℹ *Port de Plaisance (04 95 65 16 67).* 🛒 *daily.* **www**.balagne-corsica.com

Calvi, where Nelson lost his eye in an "explosion of stones" in 1794, is today half military town, half cheap vacation resort. Its 15th-century citadel is garrisoned by a crack French regiment of the foreign legion; while beyond the ferry port is a seedy, apparently endless campsite and trailer park.

The town makes a half-hearted case for being the birthplace of Christopher Columbus, but there is no real evidence to support this. A much better claim to fame is the food, which is very good and reasonably priced by Corsican standards. There is also a very respectable jazz festival at Calvi toward the end of June.

Outside town, the 19th-century **Chapelle de Notre-Dame de la Serra** is gloriously sited on a hilltop commanding extensive views in all directions.

French foreign legionnaire

The Chapelle de Notre-Dame de la Serra, 3.5 miles (6 km) southwest of Calvi

Corte's 15th-century citadel seen at dawn

The Niolo ❻

Haute-Corse. 🚆 *Corte.* ℹ *route de Cuccia (04 95 48 05 22).*

The Niolo, west of Corte, extends westward to the Vergio pass and the upper Golo basin, and to the east as far as the Scala di Santa Regina. It includes Corsica's highest mountain, the 8,859-ft (2,700-m) **Monte Cinto**, and its biggest river, the **Golo**, which meets the sea south of Bastia.

Alone of the various regions of Corsica, the Niolo persists in the cultivation of livestock as its economic mainstay.

The main town, **Calacuccia**, is suitable for excursions to Monte Cinto. The nearby ski resort of **Haut Asco** is best reached by the D147 from **Asco**, but enthusiasts can walk from Calacuccia (8–9 hours). To the south is the huge forest of **Valdu Niello**.

Corte ❼

Haute-Corse. 👥 *6,700.* 🚆 🚌
ℹ *la Citadelle (04 95 46 26 70).*
Fri. **www**.centru-corsica.com

In the geographical center of Corsica, Corte was the chosen capital of the independence leader Pasqual Paoli from 1755–69, and today is the seat of the island's university.
In the Old Town is the 15th-century citadel, housing the **Museu di a Corsica**. Its exhibits relate to traditional Corsican life and anthropology.

Corte is the best base for exploring nearby mountain areas, especially since it stands exactly halfway along the GR20, the legendary 137-mile (220-km) trail from Calenzana to Conca.

Museu di a Corsica
La Citadelle. ***Tel*** *04 95 45 25 45.*
○ *Apr–Jun & Oct: Tue–Sun; Jul–Sep: daily; Nov–Mar: Tue–Sat.*
● *public hols.* ♿
www.musee-corse.com

Environs
Don't miss the wildly beautiful **Gorges de la Restonica**, about 7.5 miles (12 km) out of town via the D623. Above these gorges adventurous walkers may wish to make the well-marked climb to the snow-fed **Lac de Melo** (allow 60–90 minutes); or the **Lac de Capitello**, 30 minutes farther on, where the snow stays as late as early June. The path – in winter a cross-country ski trail – follows the river.

South of Corte, the **Forêt de Vizzavona** features beech and pine woodland crisscrossed by trout-filled streams and walking trails (notably the GR20). It is a perfect refuge from the summer heat and is also an excuse to take the small-gauge train up from Ajaccio or Bastia, which stops at Vizzavona.

The Castagniccia ❽

Haute-Corse. ✈ *Bastia.* 🚆 *Corte, Ponte Leccia.* 🚌 *Piedicroce, La Porta, Valle-d'Alesani.* ℹ *Folelli (04 95 35 82 54).* **www**.castagniccia.fr

East of Corte is the hilly, chestnut-covered region of Castagniccia (literally "small chestnut grove"), which most Corsicans agree is the very heart and kernel of the island. It was here that independence leader Pasquale Paoli was born in 1725, and that the revolts against Genoa and later France began in earnest in 1729. Alas, many of the villages in this beautiful, remote area are nearly empty, their inhabitants having joined the 800,000 or so Corsicans (almost three times the present population) who live and work in mainland France or Italy. It seems hard to believe that in the 17th century, when the great chestnut forests introduced here by the Genoese were at the height of their production, this was the most prosperous and populated region in Corsica.

The D71 from Ponte Leccia (north of Corte) to the east coast winds through the center of the Castagniccia region, and to see it at a leisurely pace will take the best part of a day. Arm yourself with a picnic before you start, since there is little to be had in the way of supplies en route.

◁ **Limestone cliffs of Bonifacio *(see p543)***

Golfe de Porto ❾

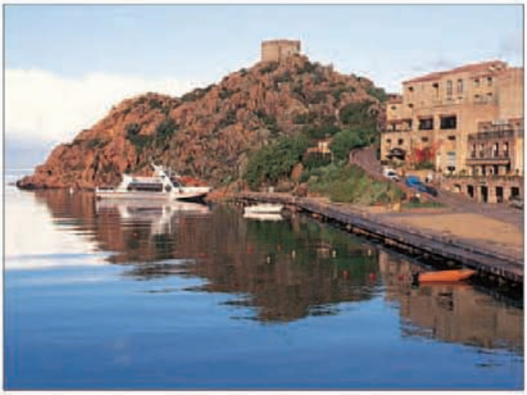
Corse-du-Sud. ✈ 🚆 ⛴ *Ajaccio.* 🚌 *Porto.* ℹ *Porto (04 95 26 10 55).* **www**.porto-tourisme.com

Porto is sited at the head of the Golfe de Porto, one of the most beautiful bays in the Mediterranean, which for the sake of its fauna and flora has been included in UNESCO's list of the world's common cultural heritage sites. The town has a magnificent Genoese watchtower – the perfect spot for admiring the sunset – and regular boat excursions (Apr–Oct) to the Calanche, Scandola, and Girolata.

The **Calanche** begin 1.2 miles (2 km) out of Porto, on the road to Piana. These 1,000-ft (300-m) red granite cliffs plunge sheer to the sea, and are quite simply breathtaking. They are accessible only by boat or on foot: well-defined trails start from the Tête du Chien and the Pont de Mezanu, while boat tickets are available at Porto's Hôtel Le Cyrnée.

East of Porto are the Gorges de la Spelunca, accessed by a mule route punctuated by Genoese bridges.

Just south of Porto along a spectacular corniche drive passing under granite archways, lies the pretty village of **Piana**, a good base for visiting this whole area, with information on recommended walks. One particularly worthwhile destination is the cove at **Ficajola** just below Piana – a truly delightful beach.



Porto's marina and Genoese watchtower

Environs

The road over the mountains from Porto to Calvi offers no more than a taste of this grandiose corner of Corsica – you have to take to the sea to view it properly (ferries from Porto and Galéria). **Girolata**, a tiny hamlet north of Porto, can be reached only by sea or via a mule track (4 hours round trip on foot) from a clearly marked point 14 miles (23 km) north of Porto on the D81.

At the mouth of the Golfe de Girolata, the **Réserve Naturelle de Scandola**, instituted in 1975, is the first land-and-sea preserve in France, covering over 2,500 acres (1,000 hectares) of sea, and a similar area of cliffs, caves, and maquis. Marine life is abundant in these clear, protected waters; the birds include ospreys, puffins, and falcons.

CORSICAN FLOWERS

Rock-rose

For lovers of wild flowers, Corsica is a Mediterranean jewel. Much of the island is covered with maquis, a tangle of aromatic shrubs and low trees which flowers from late winter onward. Among its dense variety are the showy rockroses, which shower the ground with short-lived pink or white petals, and brilliant yellow broom. Grassy and rocky slopes are good places to spot the widespread tassel hyacinth and the Illyrian sea lily which grows only in Corsica and Sardinia.

Spanish broom

Illyrian sea lily

Tassel hyacinth

The town of Piana with the Calanche in the background

Cargèse's Greek rite church

Cargèse ⑩

Corse-du-Sud. 👥 *1,000.* 🚌 ℹ *rue du Docteur Dragacci (04 95 26 41 31).*
www.cargese.net

Cargèse overlooks the sea from a promontory between the bays of Sagone and Pero. It is a small town with an odd history: many of the people who live here are the descendants of 17th-century Greek refugees from Turkish rule, given asylum in Corsica.

A few Cargèsiens still speak Greek, and their icon-filled Eastern (Greek) rite church faces its Catholic counterpart in an attitude that must once have seemed confrontational. Nowadays the old rivalries have vanished, and the Orthodox priest and Catholic *curé* often stand in for one another.

There are many splendid beaches in the vicinity, notably at **Pero** and **Chiuni** just to the north, and at **Ménasina** and **Stagnoli** to the south.

Statue of Napoleon by Laboureur in place Maréchal Foch, Ajaccio

Ajaccio ⑪

Corse-du-Sud. 👥 *60,000.* ✈ 🚆 🚌 ⛴ ℹ *3 bd du Roi Jérôme (04 95 51 53 03).* ⊖ *Tue–Sun.*
www.ajaccio-tourisme.com

Ajaccio, a noisy, busy town by Corsican standards, was the birthplace of Napoleon Bonaparte in 1769. Napoleon never returned to Corsica after crowning himself emperor of the French in 1804, but the town – modern capital of nationalist Corsica – celebrates his birthday every August 15.

The 16th-century **Cathédrale Notre-Dame de la Miséricorde**, where Napoleon was baptized in 1771, houses Delacroix's painting *Vierge du Sacré-Coeur*.

A few streets away, the **Maison Bonaparte**, where Napoleon was born and spent his childhood, contains family portraits, period furniture, and assorted memorabilia.

Much more interesting is the superb collection of artworks assembled on the coat-tails of Napoleon by his unscrupulous uncle, Cardinal Fesch, who merrily looted churches, palaces, and museums during the Italian campaign and brought the swag home to Ajaccio. Housed in the 19th-century Palais Fesch, the **Musée Palais Fesch** contains the finest collection of Italian primitive art in France after the Louvre. Among its masterpieces are works by Bellini, Botticelli, Titian and Veronese, Bernini, and Poussin. Next to the Palais Fesch stands the **Chapelle Impériale**, built in 1855 by Napoleon III to accommodate the tombs of the Bonapartes. From here, walk back along the quay to the Jetée de la Citadelle, which offers superb views of the town, the marina, and the Golfe d'Ajaccio. The adjacent 16th-century **citadel** is occupied by the army.

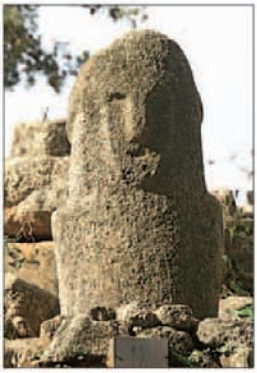
🏛 Maison Bonaparte
Rue St-Charles. ***Tel*** *04 95 21 43 89.*
○ *Tue–Sun.* 🎫 🛍

🏛 Musée Palais Fesch
50 rue Cardinal Fesch. ***Tel*** *04 95 21 48 17.* ○ *Apr–Jun, Sep: Tue–Sun; Jul–Aug: daily; Oct–Mar: Tue–Fri, Sun.* 🎫 ♿
www.musee-fesch.com

Environs

From the Quai de la Citadelle there are daily excursions to the **Îles Sanguinaires** at the mouth of the Golfe d'Ajaccio.

At Vero, 13 miles (21 km) northeast on the N193, is an unusual park, **A Cupulatta**, with over 150 species of tortoises and turtles (Apr–Oct).



A statue-menhir at Filitosa

Filitosa ⑫

Centre Préhistorique de Filitosa, Corse-du-Sud. ***Tel*** *04 95 74 00 91.*
○ *Apr–Oct: daily.* 🎫 📺 🛍
www.filitosa.fr

The 4,000-year-old, life-sized stone warriors of Filitosa are the most spectacular relics of megalithic man in Corsica. Discovered in 1946, these phallus-like granite menhirs represent an interesting progression from mere silhouettes to more detailed sculpture, etched with human features.

The five most recent and most sophisticated figures (about 1500 BC) stand around a thousand-year-old olive

The fortified Old Town of Bonifacio, with the harbor in the foreground

tree, in the field below a tumulus. Other finds, which include a heavily armed warrior with shield, helmet, and sword, can be seen in the site's archeological museum.

Sartène ⑬

Corse-du-Sud. 👥 *3,600.* 🚌 ℹ *cours Soeur Amélie (04 95 77 15 40).* ⛺ *summer: daily; winter: Sat.*

Sartene is a medieval fortified town of narrow cobbled streets and gray granite houses rising above the Rizzanese valley. Founded by the Genoese in the early 16th century, it has survived attacks by Barbary pirates and centuries of bloody feuding among the town's leading families.

Despite all this, Sartène has a reputation for deep piety, reinforced each year by the oldest and most intense Christian ceremony in Corsica, the Good Friday Catenacciu (literally, the "chained one"). A red-hooded penitent, barefoot and in chains, drags a wooden cross through the Old Town in a re-enactment of Christ's ascent to Golgotha.

Environs

In the center of town is the **Musée de la Préhistoire Corse** has a fascinating collection of artifacts from the Neolithic period, the Bronze Age, and Iron Age.

🏛 Musée de la Préhistoire Corse

Bd Jaques Nicolai. ***Tel*** *04 95 77 01 49.* ● *for renovation – phone to check.* ♿

Bonifacio ⑭

Corse-du-Sud. 👥 *2,700.* 🚌 ⛴ ℹ *rue Fred Scamaroni (04 95 73 11 88).* ⛺ *Wed.* **www**.bonifacio.fr

Bonifacio is the southernmost town in Corsica, dramatically sited on a limestone and granite cliff peninsula with stunning views *(see pp538–9).* Its handsome harbor at the foot of the cliffs is the focus of life: cafés, restaurants, and boutiques abound and boats depart regularly for neighboring Sardinia and the uninhabited island of Lavezzi.

From the harbor, steps lead up to Bonifacio's fortified Old Town. The citadel, which was built by the conquering Genoese at the end of the 12th century, has long been the town's main defensive post, and from 1963–83 was the headquarters of the French foreign legion. From here, wander down to the tip of the promontory to see the three old windmills and the ruins of a Franciscan monastery.

Côte Orientale ⑮

Haute-Corse & Corse-du-Sud. ✈ *Bastia.* ℹ *Aléria, Salenzara, Porto-Vecchio.* ⛴ *Bastia, Porto-Vecchio.* ℹ *Aléria (04 95 57 01 51), Porto-Vecchio (04 95 70 09 58).*

The flat, rather dreary alluvial plain stretching from Bastia to Solenzara has been rich farmland since 1945, the year it was finally drained and rid of malaria. More recently, vacation resorts and even high-rise hotels have mushroomed along the coast, cashing in on its long, sandy beaches.

The best sight in **Mariana**, which is otherwise uncomfortably close to the Bastia-Poretta airport, is the early 12th-century cathedral of Mariana known as **La Canonica**. A short distance away is the slightly older **Eglise de San Perteo**, surrounded by meadows.

About halfway down the coast, the port of **Aléria**, originally a Greek colony and the base for Rome's conquest of Corsica in 259 BC, is interesting for its rich archeological heritage. Just outside town, a museum housed in the 16th-century Fort de Matra chronicles daily life in Roman Aléria.

Toward the southern tip of the island, the fortified town of **Porto-Vecchio**, built by Corsica's Genoese conquerors, is now an extremely popular seaside resort. The setting is perfect for the conventional seaside vacation, with umbrella pines, cork oak forests, and glorious white sandy beaches within easy reach of the town, especially at **Palombaggia** and **Pinarello**.

The Golfe de Porto-Vecchio

2828 PC 13

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WHERE TO STAY

Many of France's 22,000 registered hotels are charming, idiosyncratic, and good value. On these four pages, the types of hotel on offer are summarized and tips provided on what to expect from French hotels. The hotel listings pages *(see pp550–95)* describe some of the best hotels around the country in every price category and style, from slick, modern chain hotels to small, classic, family-run establishments. Also included are *chambres d'hôte* (a sort of French bed and breakfast), which range from simple farms to grand châteaus, as well as the best hostels. France is full of furnished vacation apartments and houses and information is given on renting a rural home or *gîte*, and how to get the most out of a camping vacation.

The Hôtel Euzkadi at Espelette in the Pyrenees *(see p586)*

THE CLASSIC FAMILY HOTEL

If you're touring on a budget, the small, family-run, family-oriented hotel lurking in virtually every village and town is for you. It's likely to be the focal point of the village, with the bar and dining-room (if the food is up to standard) full of locals. The atmosphere is entirely informal, with children, cats, and dogs happily at home. In the hotel's dozen or so bedrooms, old-fashioned charm will make up for a lack of sprightliness and, perhaps, the mere trickle of hot water from the shower.

The annual *Logis de France* guide details over 4,000 of these family-run, mainly one- and two-star hotel-restaurants. They tend to be located in small towns or rural locations; there are none in Paris. Most are no more than roadside inns, but off the beaten track you will discover many converted farmhouses and inexpensive seaside hotels. While the *Logis* is a useful reference source, the quality of places listed can be uneven.

THE CHATEAU HOTEL

Many of France's châteaus and mansions have been converted into luxury hotels. They include everything from Renaissance piles with sweeping lawns to medieval castles with battlements and keeps. Grand hotels can be found all over France, with rich pickings in the Loire, the Savoie, the Haute-Savoie, and the Rhône delta. The properties included in the **Relais et Châteaux** brochure are recommended.

Typically, rooms are beautifully designed and the food is *haute cuisine*. Bedrooms range from grand suites to more simple abodes, often in converted farm-buildings, making it possible, if you're willing to forgo four-poster beds and antiques, to live in luxury without breaking the bank.

THE CITY HOTEL

Every big city has a clutch of hotels close to the train station or port. They range from cheap accommodations to a grand hotel or two. The most famous city hotels are the palace hotels in Paris and the Riviera resorts such as Nice and Cannes. Note that many city hotels do not have a restaurant or a salon and it is always worth checking the quality of the bedroom before you officially check in.

THE MODERN CHAIN HOTEL

Outlets of modern hotel chains are useful for inexpensive pitstops if you're traveling through France. Many are situated on the outskirts of towns near highways or main roads. The cheapest are the one-star, no-frills **Formule 1** motels, offering bedrooms with a double and single bed and no en suite facilities.

Two-star chains include **Ibis/ Campanile, Hotels Première Classe**, and **Etap**. Three-star chains include **Novotel** and **Mercure**; both offer en suite accommodations and usually allow one child to stay with no charge, provided the

Le Négresco in Nice on the Côte d'Azur *(see p593)*

The Meurice hotel in the Tuileries Quarter of Paris *(see p555)*

whole family sleeps in one room (Novotel has free accommodations for two under-16s).

THE RESTAURANT-WITH-ROOMS

Throughout France, many upmarket restaurants also offer accommodations. Usually, the bedrooms match the restaurant's quality and are priced accordingly. Sometimes, though, gourmet restaurants have simple bedrooms hidden away upstairs – great finds for those who like to splash out on food while saving on lodging. Refer to the restaurant listings on pages 600–51.

MEALS AND FACILITIES

In high season, many resort hotels insist on half board or *demi-pension* (a per person rate for the room, dinner, and breakfast). There is also full board or *pension*, which covers lunch, too. While it is cheaper to opt for inclusive rates, meals come from set or limited-choice menus, which often omit the more interesting dishes.

Many smaller family-run hotels do not provide meals on Sunday evenings and often stop serving dinner as early as 9pm on other days.

Rooms usually have double beds; twin or single beds must be requested when reserving. All mid-range hotels have a choice of bathroom facilities. A short walk down the corridor to a separate bathroom can reduce the room rate considerably. A bathroom with a bath *(un bain)* is usually more expensive than one with a shower *(une douche); un cabinet de toilette* has a basin and bidet, without a bath, shower, or toilet. If you do not have *pension* or *demi-pension* accommodation, breakfast is often charged as an extra. Go instead to the local café, which may be cheaper and more filling.

Hôtel de l'Abbaye at Talloires in the French Alps *(see p580)*

GRADINGS

French hotels are graded from one star to five stars. Stars indicate the hotel's facilities. Hotels with two or more stars must have an elevator where appropriate, a phone in every bedroom, and at least 40 percent of their bedrooms en suite. Three-star hotels must offer breakfast in the bedroom and have 80 percent en suite rooms. Only four- and five-star hotels must have room service, air conditioning, and all of their rooms en suite.

PRICES

Rates, inclusive of tax and service, are quoted per room (apart from *pension* and *demi-pension* arrangements). There is usually a small supplement for a third person in a room for two, and little reduction for single travelers.

As a rule, the higher the star rating the more you pay. Rates for a double room start from about 30€ per night for a one-star hotel and go up to 90€ or more for a four-star hotel. Costs also vary geographically with remote rural areas like Brittany being the cheapest. For equivalent accommodations in fashionable areas like the Dordogne and Provence expect to pay 20 percent more, and a further 20 percent again for Paris and the Côte d'Azur. Prices vary seasonally, too, with coastal and alpine areas raising rates by up to 50 percent in peak periods.

RESERVATIONS

Always reserve well in advance for Paris, and for hotels in popular tourist areas in July and August.

In resort areas, most hotels close from October to March, so phone ahead when traveling out of season to make sure the place is open.

Reservations can normally be held with a credit card at all but the humblest hotels. If you want to make a booking while you are in France, there are tourist offices in all main cities which provide a hotel reservation service up to eight days in advance.

The dining room of the Hôtel de la Cité, Carcassonne ***(see p589)***

BED AND BREAKFAST

French bed and breakfasts, called *chambres d'hôte,* come in all shapes and sizes, from tiny cottages to elaborate châteaux full of family portraits and antiques, plus some *fermes-auberges (see p597).* In all cases you will stay in a private home, and should not expect hotel services or amenities. Many offer dinner – *table d'hôte* – on request, where you usually dine *en famille*. Over 25,000 rural *chambres d'hôte* are registered and inspected by **Gîtes de France**. Look out for the yellow and green *chambres d'hôte* signs on the roadside.

Roadside signs also lead to many B&Bs that are not registered. Information on these is available from local tourist offices.

HOUSE RENTALS

The fabled *gîte* is a rural vacation home often converted from a farmhouse or its outbuildings. A *gîte* vacation is a popular and relatively cheap way to see France, particularly out of season, but you must book many months in advance for the best *gîtes.*

Gîtes de France registers some 42,500 *gîtes*, all inspected and graded to indicate the level of facilities. You can choose from a selection of 2,500 in the company's main brochure (available from the London office), or direct. Each of its 95 regional offices produces a booklet with all the *gîtes* in its *département,* which comes with a booking form. These are also available through the head office in Paris, **Maison des Gîtes de France**, which itself publishes a series of listings catering for those with more specialized requirements. These include *gîtes* for skiing, *gîtes* with horses, rural *gîtes*, and serious luxury *gîtes*.

The Gîtes de France logo

France has plenty of other kinds of self-catering accommodations: expensive south-coast villas, ski resort chalets, city and coastal apartments. The *Allo Vacances* website (www.allovacances.com) provides a reservation service for vacation rentals throughout the different regions.

CAMPING

Eleven thousand official sites are spread around France's diverse countryside. The **Fédération Française de Camping et de Caravaning (FFCC)** publishes a comprehensive list, updated every year. Gîtes de France's *Camping à la Ferme* guide covers some simpler sites on farm land.

Campsites are graded from one to four stars. Three- and four-star sites are usually impressively spacious with plenty of amenities and electricity connections for a percentage of tents and campers. One- and two-star sites always have toilets, a public phone, and running water (though in one-star sites sometimes only cold water). What they lack in facilities they often make up for in peacefulness and rural charm.

Note, some sites only accept visitors with a **camping carnet**. *Carnets* are available from the AA, RAC, and the clubs listed on the facing page.

HOSTELS

Hostels are a money-saving option for single travelers, though cheap hotels are often no more expensive for those travelling with a partner.

The IYHF's Hostelling guide details the **FUAJ**'s (Fédération Unie des Auberges de Jeunesse) 220 hostels around France, open to all ages and offering dormitory accommodation. If you are not a member of the **YHA** (Youth Hostel Association) in your home

Vacationers enjoying the pool at a campsite in high season

country, you have to pay a small surcharge each time you stay in a French youth hostel. **UCRIF** (Union des Centres de Rencontres Internationales de France) has 50 centers with a cultural bent scattered around France. All have single, shared, and dormitory accommodations and a restaurant.

In summer, you can stay in university rooms. Contact **CROUS** (Centre Régional des Oeuvres Universitaires et Scolaires) for details. *Gîtes d'étape* are usually large farmhouses with dormitories near walking, bicycling, and horse riding trails. Gîtes de France's *Gîtes d'Etape et de Séjour* guide details 1,600 sites.

DISABLED TRAVELERS

A number of associations publish information on accommodations throughout France with wheelchair access: the **Association des Paralysés de France (APF)**, the **Groupement pour l'Insertion des Personnes Handicapées Physiques (GIHP)**, and Gîtes de France's guide *Accessibles*. APF has its own travel company, APF Evasion, to help arrange a vacation. **Les Compagnons du Voyage** (part of SNCF/ RATP), can arrange transportation, escorted or not, on all public transportation networks throughout France. There is also a useful website, www.guide-accessible.com, that lists, region by region, transportation companies adapted for wheelchair access.

The Carlton Intercontinental in Cannes *(see p592)*

FURTHER INFORMATION

A selection of brochures can be obtained from **Maison de la France**, including *City Breaks in France* and *France's Cultural Sites*, as well as the magazine *Traveler in France*. The French Government Tourist Office distributes *Logis de France* guides, and all the booklets for château-hotels and château-B&Bs. However, it only distributes the *Relais et Châteaux* guide over the counter.

The first port of call for all non-hotel accommodations in the French countryside should be Gîtes de France, including for B&B (brochures available from their Paris shop).

When in France, local tourist offices are the best source of information for B&Bs and furnished rentals.

Loisirs Accueil are special booking agencies that offer information on hotels, campsites, *gîtes*, and B&Bs in their area. A list of all 53 offices in France is available from the UK French Tourist Office.

DIRECTORY

CHAIN HOTELS

Campanile
Tel *08 25 00 30 03 France.*
www.campanile.com

Etap
Tel *08 92 68 89 00 France.*
www.etaphotel.com

Formule 1
Tel *08 92 685 685 France.*
www.hotelformule1.com

Hotel Première Classe
Tel *08 92 68 81 23 France.*
www.premiereclasse.com

Ibis
Tel *0870 609 0963 UK.*
Tel *0892 686 686 France.*
www.ibishotel.com

Novotel
Tel *0870 609 0962 UK.*
Tel *0825 012 011 France.*
www.accor.com

Relais et Châteaux
Tel *0825 32 32 32 France.*
www.relaischateaux.com

HOUSE RENTALS & B&B

Gîtes de France
59 St-Lazare, 75009 Paris.
Tel *01 49 70 75 75 or 08 91 16 22 22 (chambre d'hôte).* **www**.gites-de-france.fr Brochures can be obtained from Maison de la France, London.
www.franceguide.com

CAMPING

Fédération Française de Camping et de Caravaning (FFCC)
78 rue de Rivoli, 75004 Paris. **Tel** *01 42 72 84 08.*
Fax *01 42 72 70 21.*
www.ffcc.fr

HOSTELS

CROUS
39 av G-Bernanos, 75231 Paris Cedex 05.
Tel *01 40 51 36 00.*
www.crous-paris.fr

FUAJ (Féderation Unie des Auberges de Jeunesse)
27 rue Pajol, 75018 Paris.
Tel *01 44 89 87 27.*
www.fuaj.fr

UCRIF
27 rue de Turbigo, 75002 Paris. **Tel** *01 40 26 57 64.*
www.ethic-etapes.fr

YHA (Youth Hostel Association)
Trevelyan House, Matlock Derbyshire DE4 3YH, UK.
Tel *0870 870 8868.*
www.yha.org.uk

American Youth Hostel Association
8401 Colesville Road, Suite 60, Silver Spring, MD 20910, USA.
Tel *(301) 495 1240.*
www.hiusa.org

DISABLED TRAVELERS

APF
17 bd August Blanqui, 75013 Paris.
Tel *01 40 78 69 00.*
Fax *01 45 89 40 57.*
www.apf.asso.fr

GIHP
10 rue Georges de Porto-Riche, 75014 Paris.
Tel *01 43 95 66 36.*
Fax *01 45 40 40 26.*
www.gihpnational.org

Les Compagnons du Voyage
34 rue Championnet, LAC CG25, 75018 Paris.
Tel *01 58 76 08 33.*
www.compagnons.com

FURTHER INFORMATION

Loisirs Accueil
www.loisirs-accueil.fr

Maison de la France Office
Lincoln House,
300 High Holborn,
London W1V 7JH, UK.
Tel *020 7061 6600*
(within UK only).
www.franceguide.com

Choosing a Hotel

Hotels have been selected across a wide price range for facilities, good value, and location. All rooms have private bath, TV, air conditioning, and are wheelchair accessible unless otherwise indicated. Most have Internet access, and in some cases, fitness facilities may be offsite. The hotels are listed by area. For map references, *see pp154-169*.

PRICE CATEGORIES

The following price ranges are for a standard double room and taxes per night during the high season. Breakfast is not included, unless specified:

€ under €80
€€ €80–€130
€€€ €130–€180
€€€€ €180–€250
€€€€€ over €250

PARIS

BEAUBOURG AND LES HALLES Hôtel Britannique €€€€

20 av Victoria, 75001 ***Tel*** *01 42 33 74 59* ***Fax*** *01 42 33 83 65* ***Rooms*** *40* ***Map*** *13 A3*

The Britannique has many repeat visitors, who return for the central location beside Châtelet, as well as the Grand Tour atmosphere and helpful staff. A real *hôtel de charme*, with beautiful, characterful rooms and an abundance of old-fashioned charm. **www.hotel-brittanique.fr**

CHAILLOT QUARTER Hameau de Passy €€€€

48 rue de Passy, 75016 ***Tel*** *01 42 88 47 55* ***Fax*** *01 42 30 83 72* ***Rooms*** *32* ***Map*** *5 B3*

In the heart of the residential quarter of Passy, a stone's throw from the Eiffel Tower and the Trocadero, Hameau de Passy lies in a private lane, which is an oasis of green. Guest rooms overlook the garden. Breakfast is included and can be served in your room, upon request. WiFi access available. **www.paris-hotel-hameaudepassy.com**

CHAILLOT QUARTER Hôtel du Bois €€€€

11 rue du Dôme, 75016 ***Tel*** *01 45 00 31 96* ***Fax*** *01 45 00 90 05* ***Rooms*** *41* ***Map*** *2 D5*

Two minutes from the Arc de Triomphe and the Champs Elysées, Hôtel du Bois is ideal for haute-couture boutique lovers. Behind a typically Parisian façade lies an interior renovated in 2008 by the designer Michel Jouannet. The decor is light and airy with bold fabrics and bright art on the walls. **www.hoteldubois.com**

CHAILLOT QUARTER Concorde La Fayette €€€€€

3 pl du Général Koenig, 75017 ***Tel*** *01 40 68 50 68* ***Fax*** *01 40 68 50 43* ***Rooms*** *1000* ***Map*** *1 C2*

The formulaic Concorde La Fayette with its fascinating tower (one of the few in Paris) is thoroughly high-tech. Its facilities include a fitness club, a bar on the 33rd floor, restaurants, and a shopping gallery. The guest rooms afford truly splendid views over Paris and the Bois de Boulogne. **www.concorde-lafayette.com**

CHAILLOT QUARTER Costes K €€€€€

81 av Kléber, 75016 ***Tel*** *01 44 05 75 75* ***Fax*** *01 44 05 74 74* ***Rooms*** *83* ***Map*** *2 D5*

Not to be confused with the more expensive Hôtel Costes, this hotel is located just steps from the Eiffel Tower. It was designed and decorated by Spanish architect Ricardo Bofill, who used sycamore, stucco, marble, and stainless steel to create a feel of luxury. Cool Asian-style guest rooms. **www.hotelcostesk.com**

CHAILLOT QUARTER Hôtel Elysées Regencia €€€€€

41 av Marceau, 75016 ***Tel*** *01 47 20 42 65* ***Fax*** *01 49 52 03 42* ***Rooms*** *43* ***Map*** *2 E4*

Color is the central theme at this modishly decorated hotel right in the heart of the designer shopping district. Choose your room from a palette of blue, fuschia, aniseed (lime green), or lavender. The hotel also boasts a grand piano in the reception area, a paneled bar, and a massage room. **www.regencia.com**

CHAILLOT QUARTER Hôtel Keppler €€€€€

10 rue Kepler, 75016 ***Tel*** *01 47 20 65 05* ***Fax*** *01 47 23 02 29* ***Rooms*** *39* ***Map*** *2 E5*

After extensive renovations the Keppler is a chic and refined 4-star hotel. High ceilings throughout add to the sense of space. New facilities, such as plasma screens, satellite TV, and allergy-free pillows, are welcome innovations. **www.hotelkeppler.com**

CHAMPS-ELYSEES Royal Magda Etoile €€€

7 rue Troyon, 75017 ***Tel*** *01 47 64 10 19* ***Fax*** *01 47 64 02 12* ***Rooms*** *37* ***Map*** *2 D3*

Just minutes from the Etoile in a quiet cobbled street, the Royal Magda Etoile was tastefully renovated in 2008 in varying tones of cream. Rooms are on the small side, but the staff are exceptionally helpful and friendly, and will go out of their way to help guests, especially families. **www.paris-hotel-magda.com**

CHAMPS-ELYSEES Claridge-Bellman €€€€€

37 rue François 1er, 75008 ***Tel*** *01 47 23 54 42* ***Fax*** *01 47 23 08 84* ***Rooms*** *42* ***Map*** *2 F5*

The Claridge-Bellman is a miniature version of the old Claridge Hotel and is managed by its former directors. The hotel has a truly traditional feel. It is quiet, sober, and efficiently run, and is furnished throughout with tapestries and antiques. **www.hotelclaridgebellman.com**

Key to Symbols *see back cover flap*

CHAMPS-ELYSEES Four Seasons George V €€€€€

31 av George V, 75008 ***Tel*** *01 49 52 70 00* ***Fax*** *01 49 52 71 10* ***Rooms*** *246* ***Map*** *2 E5*

This legendary hotel, dotted with salons, old furniture, and art, lost a little of its charm when it was renovated. But it gained a stunning restaurant, Le Cinq, which boasts an award-winning chef and sommelier. There is also a great spa. Sheer opulence. **www.fourseasons.com/paris**

CHAMPS-ELYSEES Hotel Chambiges €€€€€

8 rue Chambiges, 75008 ***Tel*** *01 44 31 83 83* ***Fax*** *01 40 70 95 51* ***Rooms*** *34* ***Map*** *6 F1*

An elegant, cozy hotel on a quiet street just 5 minutes from the Champs-Elysées. Warm colors and a classically Parisian atmosphere suffuse the whole place. In warm weather, enjoy breakfast on the flowery patio. **www.hotelchambiges.com**

CHAMPS-ELYSEES Hôtel Vernet €€€€€

26 rue Vernet, 75008 ***Tel*** *01 44 31 98 00* ***Fax*** *01 44 31 85 69* ***Rooms*** *50* ***Map*** *2 E4*

Gustave Eiffel (architect of the Eiffel Tower) created the dazzling glass roof of the dining room here. The impressive lobby has white and gold paneling, sumptuous red velvet curtains, antiques, and marble flooring. The rooms are large and quiet with flat screen TVs and WiFi access. **www.hotelvernet.com**

CHAMPS-ELYSEES Le Bristol €€€€€

112 rue du Faubourg-St-Honoré, 75008 ***Tel*** *01 53 43 43 00* ***Fax*** *01 53 43 43 01* ***Rooms*** *188* ***Map*** *3 A4*

One of Paris's finest hotels, the Bristol's large rooms are sumptuously decorated with antiques and magnificent marble bathrooms. The period dining room, with its Flemish tapestries and glittering crystal chandeliers, has been given rave reviews. A new wing opened at the end of 2009. **www.hotel-bristol.com**

CHAMPS-ELYSEES Plaza Athénée €€€€€

25 av Montaigne, 75008 ***Tel*** *01 53 67 66 65* ***Fax*** *01 53 67 66 66* ***Rooms*** *191* ***Map*** *6 F1*

The last word in luxury, the legendary Plaza Athénée is popular with honeymooners, aristocracy, and haute couture shoppers. The restaurant by Alain Ducasse is wonderfully romantic, while Le Bar du Plaza is now the hottest address in Paris for cocktails. **www.plaza-athenee-paris.fr**

CHAMPS-ELYSEES San Régis €€€€€

12 rue Jean-Goujon, 75008 ***Tel*** *01 44 95 16 16* ***Fax*** *01 45 61 05 48* ***Rooms*** *44* ***Map*** *7 A1*

Since it opened in 1923 the opulent San Régis has been popular with the jet set, who are drawn to its quiet, central location. A particularly welcoming, intimate luxury hotel, it is full of antiques and overstuffed sofas. Some rooms have wonderful balcony views over the rooftops. **www.hotel-sanregis.com**

INVALIDES AND EIFFEL TOWER QUARTER Grand Hôtel Levêque €€

29 rue Cler, 75007 ***Tel*** *01 47 05 49 15* ***Fax*** *01 45 50 49 36* ***Rooms*** *50* ***Map*** *6 F3*

The Levêque lies between the Eiffel Tower and the Invalides on a pedestrianized street with a quaint fruit-and-vegetable market. The great location isn't the only attraction – guest rooms are well kept and the hotel also provides Internet access. **www.hotel-leveque.com**

INVALIDES AND EIFFEL TOWER QUARTER Hôtel de Varenne €€€

44 rue de Bourgogne, 75007 ***Tel*** *01 45 51 45 55* ***Fax*** *01 45 51 86 63* ***Rooms*** *24* ***Map*** *7 B2*

Hidden beyond the hotel's severe façade is a narrow courtyard garden where guests breakfast in the summer. The bedrooms, recently refurbished in elegant Louis XVI or Empire style, are impeccable. The hotel is popular with French government officials. **www.hoteldevarenneparis.com**

INVALIDES AND EIFFEL TOWER QUARTER Hôtel Bourgogne et Montana €€€€

3 rue de Bourgogne, 75007 ***Tel*** *01 45 51 20 22* ***Fax*** *01 45 56 11 98* ***Rooms*** *32* ***Map*** *7 B2*

Situated in front of the Assemblée Nationale, this hotel has an air of sobriety. Its features include an old-fashioned elevator and an all-white circular hall with brightly colored sofas. The guest rooms are decorated in a classical, aristocratic style. Extremely stylish. **www.bourgogne-montana.com**

INVALIDES AND EIFFEL TOWER QUARTER Hôtel de Suède St-Germain €€€€

31 rue Vaneau, 75007 ***Tel*** *01 47 05 00 08* ***Fax*** *01 47 05 69 27* ***Rooms*** *39* ***Map*** *7 B4*

Located near the Orsay and Rodin museums, Hôtel de Suède St-Germain offers elegant rooms, decorated in late 18th-century style with pale colors. Guests receive an exceptionally warm welcome. The deluxe rooms offer a view over the park. A lovely little garden to breakfast in completes the picture. **www.hoteldesuede.com**

INVALIDES AND EIFFEL TOWER QUARTER Duc de St-Simon €€€€€

14 rue de St-Simon, 75007 ***Tel*** *01 44 39 20 20* ***Fax*** *01 45 48 68 25* ***Rooms*** *34* ***Map*** *7 C3*

The Hôtel Duc de St-Simon is justifiably one of the most sought-after hotels on the south side of the Seine. A charming 18th-century mansion furnished with antiques, it lives up to its aristocratic pretensions. **www.hotelducdesaintsimon.com**

LATIN QUARTER Hôtel des Grandes Ecoles €€

75 rue Cardinal Lemoine, 75005 ***Tel*** *01 43 26 79 23* ***Fax*** *01 43 25 28 15* ***Rooms*** *51* ***Map*** *9 B5*

This hotel is a cluster of three small houses around a beautiful garden, where you can breakfast in good weather. The rooms are all comfortable and furnished with traditional 18th-century-style floral wallpaper; some open onto the courtyard. Internet and WiFi access are available. **www.hotel-grandes-ecoles.com**

LATIN QUARTER Hôtel des Grands Hommes €€

17 pl du Panthéon, 75005 ***Tel*** *01 46 34 19 60* ***Fax*** *01 43 26 67 32* ***Rooms*** *31* ***Map*** *13 A1*

Teachers at the Sorbonne frequent this quiet family hotel close to the Jardin du Luxembourg. It boasts a great view of the Panthéon from the attic rooms on the upper floor. The guest rooms are comfortable. WiFi service is available. **www.hoteldesgrandshommes.com**

LATIN QUARTER Hôtel Esmeralda €€

4 rue St-Julien-le-Pauvre, 75005 ***Tel*** *01 43 54 19 20* ***Fax*** *01 40 51 00 68* ***Rooms*** *19* ***Map*** *9 A4*

The much-loved bohemian Hôtel Esmeralda lies in the heart of the Latin Quarter. With old stone walls and beamed ceilings, its charm has seduced the likes of Terence Stamp and Serge Gainsbourg. The best rooms overlook Notre-Dame cathedral. Breakfast is not provided here.

LATIN QUARTER Hôtel les Degrès de Notre Dame €€

10 rue des Grands Degrès, 75005 ***Tel*** *01 55 42 88 88* ***Fax*** *01 40 46 95 34* ***Rooms*** *10* ***Map*** *9 B4*

An exceptionally friendly place to stay. The staff are genuinely welcoming and the wood paneling and oak beams around the building make it even more special. Lovely, clean bedrooms with Internet access available. The Bar Restaurant and Tea Room serves great food at a low price. **www.lesdegreshotel.com**

LATIN QUARTER Hôtel de Notre-Dame €€€

19 rue Maître Albert, 75006 ***Tel*** *01 43 26 79 00* ***Fax*** *01 46 33 50 11* ***Rooms*** *34* ***Map*** *9 B5*

The picturesque Hôtel de Notre-Dame overlooks Notre-Dame cathedral and the Seine on one side, and the Panthéon on the other. The furnishings are functional, but some rooms have beams or an old stone wall. The main appeal here is the location. The hotel has its own sauna and WiFi access. **www.hotel-paris-notredame.com**

LATIN QUARTER Hôtel du Panthéon €€€

19 pl du Panthéon, 75005 ***Tel*** *01 43 54 32 95* ***Fax*** *01 43 26 64 65* ***Rooms*** *36* ***Map*** *13 A1*

This hotel is managed by the same family as the Hôtel des Grands Hommes: the welcome is equally warm and the decor similarly Classical. Extra romance and luxury can be found in room 34 with its divine four-poster bed. WiFi is available throughout the hotel. **www.hoteldupantheon.com**

LUXEMBOURG QUARTER Hôtel du Globe €€

15 rue des Quatre-Vents, 75006 ***Tel*** *01 43 26 35 50* ***Fax*** *01 46 33 62 69* ***Rooms*** *14* ***Map*** *8 F4*

Occupying a 17th-century building by the Jardin du Luxembourg, the popular Hôtel du Globe provides excellent accommodations. The recently renovated guest rooms are decorated with antique furniture and colorful fabrics. Breakfast is brought to your room. Reserve in advance. **www.hotelduglobeparis.com**

LUXEMBOURG QUARTER Aviatic P €€€

105 rue de Vaugirard, 75006 ***Tel*** *01 53 63 25 50* ***Fax*** *01 53 63 25 55* ***Rooms*** *43* ***Map*** *8 E5*

True to its Parisian past and long-standing family hotel tradition, the much-loved Aviatic combines bohemian style with modern comforts. The rooms are individually decorated with charming pieces found at local flea markets and warm, bright textiles. Parking is available for an additional fee. Free apéritifs are offered on some evenings. **www.aviatic.fr**

LUXEMBOURG QUARTER Hôtel Louis II €€€€

2 rue St-Sulpice, 75006 ***Tel*** *01 46 33 13 80* ***Fax*** *01 46 33 17 29* ***Rooms*** *22* ***Map*** *8 E4*

The charming, light-filled rooms of the Louis II are all individually styled. Each is characterized by exposed wooden beams, tasteful decor, and great attention to detail. Rooms overlook rue St-Sulpice or rue de Condé. The suites in the roof are particularly appealing. **www.hotel-louis2.com**

MONTMARTRE Regyn's Montmartre €€

18 pl des Abbesses, 75018 ***Tel*** *01 42 54 45 21* ***Fax*** *01 42 23 76 69* ***Rooms*** *22* ***Map*** *4 E1*

Near Sacré-Cœur, this is an impeccably kept budget hotel. The top-floor guest rooms have views of the Eiffel Tower. Around the corner is Tabac des Deux Moulins at 15 rue le Pic, where Amélie worked in the film *Amélie*. **www.paris-hotels-montmartre.com**

MONTMARTRE Relais Montmartre €€€

6 rue Constance, 75018 ***Tel*** *01 70 64 25 25* ***Fax*** *01 70 64 25 00* ***Rooms*** *26* ***Map*** *4 E1*

In the heart of Montmartre's network of steep winding streets, this charming hotel is all femininity with delicate floral fabrics, antique furniture, and painted beams. Quiet, intimate, and romantic with the added bonus of being well situated for neighborhood restaurants. **www.relaismontmartre.fr**

MONTMARTRE Terrass Hôtel €€€€€

12-14 rue Joseph-de-Maistre, 75018 ***Tel*** *01 44 92 34 14* ***Fax*** *01 42 52 29 11* ***Rooms*** *98* ***Map*** *4 E1*

Montmartre's most luxurious hotel, the rooms here are comfortable and airy with neo Art-Deco touches and, in some classic rooms, bold stripes. The big draw is the restaurant, where in the summer fashionable Parisians take in a world-class view over the city. **www.terrass-hotel.com**

MONTPARNASSE Hôtel Apollon Montparnasse P €€

91 rue Ouest, 75014 ***Tel*** *01 43 95 62 00* ***Fax*** *01 43 95 62 10* ***Rooms*** *39* ***Map*** *11 C3*

Close to the Parc des Expositions of the Porte de Versailles, the Apollon Montparnasse is decorated with Grecian statues and fine furnishings. The guest rooms are simple, but well equipped. Parking is available for an additional fee. The hotel also provides WiFi facilities. **www.paris-hotel-paris.net**

MONTPARNASSE Hôtel Delambre Montparnasse €€€

35 rue Delambre, 75014 ***Tel*** *01 43 20 66 31* ***Fax*** *01 45 38 91 76* ***Rooms*** *30* ***Map*** *12 D2*

Located a few steps from Montparnasse cemetery, and close to the Jardin de Luxembourg and the Latin Quarter, this hotel mixes modern and classical styles. Guest rooms are simply furnished, with all modern conveniences. **www.delambre-paris-hotel.com**

MONTPARNASSE Hôtel Le Ste Beuve €€€

9 rue Ste Beuve, 75006 ***Tel*** *01 45 48 20 07* ***Fax*** *01 45 48 67 52* ***Rooms*** *22* ***Map*** *12 D1*

The Ste-Beuve is a small, carefully restored hotel for aesthetes and habitués of the Rive Gauche galleries. There is a fireplace in the hall, the rooms are pleasantly decorated in pastel shades, and several classic, contemporary paintings add to the atmosphere. **www.hotel-sainte-beuve.fr**

MONTPARNASSE Villa des Artistes €€€

9 rue de la Grande Chaumière, 75006 ***Tel*** *01 43 26 60 86* ***Fax*** *01 43 54 73 70* ***Rooms*** *59* ***Map*** *12 D2*

The Villa des Artistes aims to recreate Montparnasse's artistic heyday when Modigliani, Beckett, and Fitzgerald were all visitors here. The guest rooms are clean, but the main draw is the large patio garden and fountain, where you can breakfast in peace. **www.villa-artistes.com**

MONTPARNASSE Le St-Grégoire €€€€€

43 rue de l'Abbé Grégoire, 75006 ***Tel*** *01 45 48 23 23* ***Fax*** *01 45 48 33 95* ***Rooms*** *20* ***Map*** *7 C5*

Le St-Grégoire is a fashionable townhouse hotel with immaculately decorated guest rooms with 19th-century furnishings. Reserve a room with a delightful private terrace. At the center of the drawing room is a charming fireplace. Parking is available for an additional fee. **www.hotelsaintgregoire.com**

OPERA QUARTER Ambassador €€€€€

16 bd Haussmann, 75009 ***Tel*** *01 44 83 40 40* ***Fax*** *01 42 46 19 84* ***Rooms*** *294* ***Map*** *4 E4*

One of Paris's best Art Deco hotels, the Ambassador has been restored to its former glory with plush carpeting and antique furniture. The ground floor has pink marble columns, Baccarat crystal chandeliers, and Aubusson tapestries. The restaurant, 16 Haussmann, is popular with Parisian gourmets. **www.ambassador.paris.radissonsas.com**

OPERA QUARTER Edouard VII Hotel €€€€€

39 av de l'Opéra, 75002 ***Tel*** *01 42 61 56 90* ***Fax*** *01 42 61 47 73* ***Rooms*** *76* ***Map*** *4 E5*

The only hotel on the impressive Avenue de l'Opéra, the Edouard VII is centrally located between the Louvre and the Opéra Garnier, which makes it perfect for sightseeing. Request a room at the front for a breathtaking view over the Opéra House. **www.edouard7hotel.com**

OPERA QUARTER Le Grand Hôtel Intercontinental €€€€€

2 rue Scribe, 75009 ***Tel*** *01 40 07 32 32* ***Fax*** *01 40 07 30 30* ***Rooms*** *478* ***Map*** *4 D5*

Directly next to the Opéra Garnier, this hotel is a sumptuous example of good taste. The rooms all have pictures with a musical theme reflecting the hotel's location. The opulent restaurant, the Café de La Paix, is renowned in the Opéra Quarter. **www.IHG.com**

ST-GERMAIN-DES-PRES Hôtel du Quai Voltaire €€

19 quai Voltaire, 75007 ***Tel*** *01 42 61 50 91* ***Fax*** *01 42 61 62 26* ***Rooms*** *33* ***Map*** *8 D2*

Overlooking the river, this hotel was once the favorite of Blondin, Baudelaire, and Pissarro, and has featured in several movies. It is best to avoid the rooms facing the quay, as they suffer from traffic noise. Higher floors are quieter, though, and the views are superb. **www.quaivoltaire.fr**

ST-GERMAIN-DES-PRES Grand Hôtel des Balcons €€€

3 rue Casimir Delavigne, 75006 ***Tel*** *01 46 34 78 50* ***Fax*** *01 46 34 06 27* ***Rooms*** *50* ***Map*** *8 F5*

Embellished with Art Nouveau features, this hotel has a beautiful hall with stained-glass windows and striking 19th-century-style lamps and wood paneling. Most guest rooms, quiet and well-decorated, enjoy a balcony. High-speed Internet access with WiFi is available. **www.hotelgrandsbalcons.com**

ST-GERMAIN-DES-PRES Hôtel des Marronniers €€€

21 rue Jacob, 75006 ***Tel*** *01 43 25 30 60* ***Fax*** *01 40 46 83 56* ***Rooms*** *37* ***Map*** *8 E3*

Situated between a courtyard and a garden, this hotel provides perfect tranquility. The cozy, renovated rooms are decorated with country fabrics. Those on the fourth floor garden side provide memorable views over the Parisian rooftops and the St-Germain-des-Prés church steeple. **www.hotel-marronniers.com**

ST-GERMAIN-DES-PRES Hôtel des Sts-Pères €€€

65 rue des Sts-Pères, 75006 ***Tel*** *01 45 44 50 00* ***Fax*** *01 45 44 90 83* ***Rooms*** *39* ***Map*** *8 E3*

Situated in one of the old aristocratic mansions of St-Germain-des-Prés, this hotel has quiet, large rooms – the best has an outstanding fresco on the ceiling. The lounge bar is popular with authors from the nearby publishing houses. **www.paris-hotel-saints-peres.com**

ST-GERMAIN-DES-PRES Hôtel d'Angleterre €€€€

44 rue Jacob, 75006 ***Tel*** *01 42 60 34 72* ***Fax*** *01 42 60 16 93* ***Rooms*** *27* ***Map*** *8 E3*

Once the British Embassy, the Hôtel d'Angleterre has retained many of the original features, including the fine old staircase, the exquisite garden, and the salon mantelpiece. The guest rooms are individually decorated; many have exposed beams and wonderful four-poster beds. **www.hotel-dangleterre.com**

ST-GERMAIN-DES-PRES Hôtel de l'Abbaye St-Germain €€€€

10 rue Cassette, 75006 ***Tel*** *01 45 44 38 11* ***Fax*** *01 45 48 07 86* ***Rooms*** *44* ***Map*** *8 D5*

A 17th-century abbey, just steps from the Jardin du Luxembourg, this charming hotel has a history as a preferred hideout for artists and writers. Its finely furnished guest rooms and apartments have been tastefully done up and provided with modern facilities. For a real splurge, there are four duplex apartments. **www.hotelabbayeparis.com**

ST-GERMAIN-DES-PRES L'Hôtel €€€€€

13 rue des Beaux-Arts, 75006 ***Tel*** *01 44 41 99 00* ***Fax*** *01 43 25 64 81* ***Rooms*** *20* ***Map*** *8 E3*

A riot of exuberance and opulence, this Jacques Garcia-designed hotel is gloriously decadent. Each room is unique; the Oscar Wilde suite, where the Irish author died and which boasts period furnishings, is the most famous. There's also a beautiful spa and a restaurant with one Michelin star. **www.l-hotel.com**

ST-GERMAIN-DES-PRES Lutétia €€€€€

45 bd Raspail, 75006 ***Tel*** *01 49 54 46 46* ***Fax*** *01 49 54 46 00* ***Rooms*** *230* ***Map*** *8 D4*

The Lutétia is a mainstay of glamor on the south side of the river. The building's style is partly Art Nouveau and partly Art Deco, and has been restored throughout. Publishers and chic shoppers are regular customers in the restaurant. The location is convenient. **www.lutetia-paris.com**

ST-GERMAIN-DES-PRES Relais Christine €€€€€

3 rue Christine, 75006 ***Tel*** *01 40 51 60 80* ***Fax*** *01 40 51 60 81* ***Rooms*** *51* ***Map*** *8 F4*

Always full, the Relais Christine is the epitome of the *hôtel de charme*. Part of a cloister from a 16th-century abbey, the hotel is a romantic, peaceful haven. The guest rooms, especially the deluxe rooms, are bright and spacious. WiFi facilities are available. Reserve in advance. **www.relais-christine.com**

THE MARAIS Hôtel de la Bretonnerie €€

22 rue Ste-Croix de la Bretonnerie, 75004 ***Tel*** *01 48 87 77 63* ***Fax*** *01 42 77 26 78* ***Rooms*** *29* ***Map*** *9 C3*

Carved stone walls and an arched dining room in the basement are some of the charming features of Hôtel de la Bretonnerie, housed in a 17th-century mansion. Its spacious rooms, with beams and antique furniture, are each decorated differently. Service is warm and friendly. **www.hotelbretonnerie.com**

THE MARAIS Hôtel Caron de Beaumarchais €€€

12 rue Vieille du Temple, 75004 ***Tel*** *01 42 78 14 15* ***Fax*** *01 40 29 06 82* ***Rooms*** *19* ***Map*** *9 C3*

Pretty 18th-century-style fabrics and crystal chandeliers adorn this elegant boutique hotel. The rooms are cozy, yet not too small, with wooden beams and oodles of character. There are also 21st-century touches, such as Internet access and air conditioning. **www.carondebeaumarchais.com**

THE MARAIS Hôtel des Deux-Iles €€€€

59 rue St-Louis-en-l'Ile, 75004 ***Tel*** *01 43 26 13 35* ***Fax*** *01 43 29 60 25* ***Rooms*** *17* ***Map*** *9 C4*

It's a privilege to be able to stay on the Ile St-Louis, and this converted 17th-century mansion offers an affordable way to do so. Here the atmosphere is peaceful, the small bedrooms are attractive, and the lounge has a real fire. **www.deuxiles-paris-hotel.com**

THE MARAIS Hôtel du Bourg Tibourg €€€€

19 rue du Bourg-Tibourg, 75004 ***Tel*** *01 42 78 47 39* ***Fax*** *01 40 29 07 00* ***Rooms*** *30* ***Map*** *9 C3*

This stylish spot was decorated by top interior designer Jacques Garcia and is extremely popular with fashionable visitors to Paris. The rooms are opulent and all bathrooms are fully clad in black marble. The beautiful interior courtyard is a pleasant feature. **www.hotelbourgtibourg.com**

THE MARAIS Hôtel Duo €€€€

11 rue du Temple, 75004 ***Tel*** *01 42 72 72 22* ***Fax*** *01 42 72 03 53* ***Rooms*** *58* ***Map*** *9 B3*

A family-run hotel for three generations, the former Axial Beaubourg is still in the same hands, but had a trendy makeover in 2006. The stylish, contemporary decor features teal and brown and there is a bijou bar and Japanese garden. All just steps from the Pompidou Center. **www.duoparis.com**

THE MARAIS St-Paul-le-Marais €€€€

8 rue de Sévigné, 75004 ***Tel*** *01 48 04 97 27* ***Fax*** *01 48 87 37 04* ***Rooms*** *28* ***Map*** *10 D3*

Close to the historic place des Vosges, this hotel has wooden beams and old stone, with simple and modern furniture. Request a room facing the courtyard to avoid the noise of traffic coming from the rue de Sévigné. **www.hotelsaintpaullemarais.com**

THE MARAIS Murano Urban Resort €€€€€

13 bd du Temple, 75003 ***Tel*** *01 42 71 20 00* ***Fax*** *01 42 71 21 01* ***Rooms*** *52* ***Map*** *10 D1*

The über-hip and sleek Murano is the Marais' only luxury hotel. Rooms feature huge Pop Art representations of 20th-century idols, the latest technology, and have changeable colored lighting to suit your every mood. An equally cool bar and restaurant completes the glamorous scene. **www.muranoresort.com**

THE MARAIS Pavillon de la Reine €€€€€

28 pl des Vosges, 75003 ***Tel*** *01 40 29 19 19* ***Fax*** *01 40 29 19 20* ***Rooms*** *56* ***Map*** *10 D3*

Set back from the marvelous place des Vosges, the Pavillon de la Reine is the best hotel in the Marais. Incredibly romantic, the hotel has a peaceful courtyard and sumptuous guest rooms, furnished with excellent reproduction antiques. **www.pavillon-de-la-reine.com**

Key to Price Guide *see p550* **Key to Symbols** *see back cover flap*

TUILERIES QUARTER Brighton €€€

218 rue de Rivoli, 75001 ***Tel*** *01 47 03 61 61* ***Fax*** *01 42 60 41 78* ***Rooms*** *65* ***Map*** *8 D1*

A real insiders' location, the Brighton provides a much-sought-after Rivoli address without the sky-high prices. The guest rooms have beautiful, high ceilings and large windows that look out either over the Jardin des Tuileries or over the courtyard. **www.esprit-de-france.com**

TUILERIES QUARTER Hôtel Louvre Ste Anne €€€

32 rue Ste Anne, 75001 ***Tel*** *01 40 20 02 35* ***Fax*** *01 40 15 91 13* ***Rooms*** *20* ***Map*** *8 E1*

A small pleasant hotel located five minutes from the Louvre and Opéra. The hotel may be due for a makeover, but the rooms are clean, the staff are helpful, and there is a splendid reception area with a *trompe l'oeil* painting. A popular hotel with Japanese guests who frequent the nearby sushi restaurants. **www.paris-hotel-louvre.com**

TUILERIES QUARTER Hôtel du Louvre €€€€

Pl André Malraux, 75001 ***Tel*** *01 44 58 37 44* ***Fax*** *01 44 58 38 01* ***Rooms*** *177* ***Map*** *8 E1*

This, the first luxury hotel in France, was built in 1855 by order of Napoleon III. The lavish rooms have spectacular views: the Pissarro Suite is where the artist painted his view of the place du Théâtre Français. Parisians regularly visit the buzzing brasserie for lunch. **www.hoteldulouvre.com**

TUILERIES QUARTER Hôtel de Crillon €€€€€

10 pl de la Concorde, 75008 ***Tel*** *01 44 71 15 00* ***Fax*** *01 44 71 15 02* ***Rooms*** *147* ***Map*** *7 C1*

With its magnificent location on the glittering place de la Concorde, the Crillon offers unsurpassed elegance. The hotel has a fine Royal Suite and terrace, a sublime dining room, and a fashionable bar designed by French fashion designer, Sonia Rykiel. **www.crillon.com**

TUILERIES QUARTER Meurice €€€€€

228 rue de Rivoli, 75001 ***Tel*** *01 44 58 10 10* ***Fax*** *01 44 58 10 15* ***Rooms*** *150* ***Map*** *8 D1*

The Meurice is a perfect example of successful restoration, with excellent replicas of the original plasterwork and furnishings. The staff here are unfailingly helpful and the hotel offers personalized shopping and art-buying tours. The hotel's spa is first rate and the only place in Paris to offer Valmont products. **www.lemeurice.com**

TUILERIES QUARTER Ritz €€€€€

15 pl Vendôme, 75001 ***Tel*** *01 43 16 30 70* ***Fax*** *01 43 16 45 38* ***Rooms*** *162* ***Map*** *4 D5*

A legendary address, the Ritz still lives up to its reputation, combining elegance and decadence. The Louis XVI furniture and chandeliers are all original, and the floral arrangements are works of art. The Hemingway Bar is home to the glitterati. **www.ritzparis.com**

ILE DE FRANCE

BARBIZON Hostellerie La Dague €

5 grande rue, 77630 ***Tel*** *01 60 66 40 49* ***Fax*** *01 60 69 24 59* ***Rooms*** *25*

Located in an artists' village in the heart of the forest, this rustic ivy-clad manor house has a romantic setting. It is popular with Parisians, so reserve early. The bright rooms have pretty floral furnishings; there is also a modern annex. The traditional French restaurant is charming. **www.ladague.com**

BELLEVILLE MamaShelter €

109 rue de Bagnolet, 75020 ***Tel*** *01 43 48 48 48* ***Fax*** *01 43 48 49 49* ***Rooms*** *172*

This concept hotel designed by Philippe Starck offers exceptionally low prices for non-refundable reservations; if you require flexibility the prices double. The contemporary rooms all have i-Macs, satin-cotton sheets, and microwaves. There is a trendy lounge bar and restaurant, too. **www.mamashelter.com**

ENGHIEN-LES-BAINS Grand Hôtel Barrière €€€€

85 rue Général de Gaulle, 95880 ***Tel*** *01 39 34 10 00* ***Fax*** *01 39 34 10 01* ***Rooms*** *43*

In the heart of this bustling spa town overlooking a lake, the Grand Hôtel lives up to its name. The interior was recently re-styled by Jacques Garcia. The rooms are luxurious, some in Louis XV style. The hotel has a traditional gourmet restaurant, and a casino. **www.lucienbarriere.com**

FONTAINBLEAU Grand Hôtel de l'Aigle Noir €€€€€

27 pl de Napoléon Bonaparte, 77300 ***Tel*** *01 60 74 60 00* ***Fax*** *01 60 74 60 01* ***Rooms*** *18*

This prestigious mansion overlooks Fontainebleau château and its vast park. The elegant rooms are decorated in styles ranging from Louis XIII to Napoléon III. The conciergerie can arrange a host of activities in the area, and the bar serves snacks all day. **www.hotelaiglenoir.com**

MAFFLIERS Château de Maffliers €€

Allée des Marronniers, 95560 ***Tel*** *01 34 08 35 35* ***Fax*** *01 34 08 35 00* ***Rooms*** *99*

This 19th-century château lies in the heart of the L'Isle d'Adam forest, surrounded by a huge private park. The contemporary guest rooms have all modern conveniences including WiFi. Some nonsmoking and wheelchair-accessible rooms. Bikes available to explore the forest. **www.novotel.com**

ROISSY-CHARLES-DE-GAULLE Sheraton Paris Airport €€€€€

Terminal 2, Charles de Gaulle airport, Roissy, 95716 ***Tel*** *01 49 19 70 70* ***Fax*** *01 49 19 70 71* ***Rooms*** *247* ***Map*** *Off map*

This state-of-the-art Sheraton is actually built into Terminal 2 and guarantees the longest sleep-in to anyone with a morning flight. Its neat and comfortable rooms have plenty of amenities and insulated windows, which means you can watch the planes taxiing by without hearing a thing. **www.sheratonparisairport.fr**

ST-GERMAIN-EN-LAYE Pavillon Henri IV €€€

19-21 rue Thiers, 78100 ***Tel*** *01 39 10 15 15* ***Fax*** *01 39 73 93 73* ***Rooms*** *42*

This sumptuous hotel is housed in a historic lodge built by Henri IV. It was here in 1638 that Louis XIV was born, and later where Dumas wrote *The Three Musketeers*. There is a wonderful panorama of Paris, and a gourmet restaurant. The rooms are stylish. **www.pavillon-henri-4.com**

ST PRIX Hostellerie du Prieuré €€

74 rue Auguste Rey, 95390 ***Tel*** *01 34 27 51 51* ***Fax*** *01 39 59 21 21* ***Rooms*** *8*

Located just 15 minutes by train from the Gare du Nord, this ancient *bistrot* now houses eight spacious bedrooms, all individually furnished. The "Pompadour" is particularly grand and has a view of Paris in the distance. A copious breakfast is served and there are restaurants nearby. Friendly, helpful staff. **www.hostelduprieure.com**

ST-SYMPHORIEN LE CHATEAU Château d'Esclimont €€€€

28700 ***Tel*** *02 37 31 15 15* ***Fax*** *02 37 31 57 91* ***Rooms*** *53*

This magnificent 16th-century fairytale château has a private forest, tennis courts, a golf course and a fitness circuit. This turreted building offers meticulously kept, comfortable rooms. The gourmet restaurant provides impeccable service. Dogs are welcome. **www.grandesetapes.fr**

VERSAILLES Hôtel de Clagny €€

6 impasse de Clagny, 78000 ***Tel*** *01 39 50 18 09* ***Fax*** *01 39 50 85 17* ***Rooms*** *21*

The welcome in this quiet hotel near the train station is genuinely friendly. The rooms are furnished simply and clean, but unremarkable. There are numerous restaurants in the vicinity, and the owners of the Hôtel de Clagny are only too pleased to offer guidance.

VERSAILLES Trianon Palace €€€€€

1 bd de la Reine, 78000 ***Tel*** *01 30 84 50 00* ***Fax*** *01 30 84 50 01* ***Rooms*** *199*

This is undoubtably the most splendid hotel in the region. Built in Regency style, the hotel offers gorgeous, luxury guest rooms. The gourmet restaurant, run by Brit chef Gordon Ramsey, is the jewel in the crown. There is even a *hammam* (Turkish bath) for guests. **www.trianonpalace.fr**

LE NORD & PICARDY

AMIENS Hôtel de Normandie €

1bis rue Lamartine, 80000 ***Tel*** *03 22 91 74 99* ***Fax*** *03 22 92 06 56* ***Rooms*** *28*

This pleasant hotel with a red brick and stucco façade stands in a quiet street near the cathedral and train station. The rooms are spacious, with modern furnishings. The hotel has an arrangement with Le T'Chiot Zinc, an inexpensive traditional restaurant where meals can be eaten. Parking is extra. **www.hotelnormandie-80.com**

AMIENS Victor Hugo €

2 rue de l'Oratoire, 80000 ***Tel*** *03 22 91 57 91* ***Fax*** *03 22 92 74 02* ***Rooms*** *10*

This friendly family hotel near the famous Gothic cathedral has a stone Bible carved into the façade. An old wooden staircase leads to the guest rooms. It makes an ideal base for exploring the city and is within easy walking distance of stores, restaurants, and bars. **www.hotel-a-amiens.com**

BERCK-SUR-MER Hôtel Neptune €

Esplanade Parmentier, 62600 ***Tel*** *03 21 09 21 21* ***Fax*** *03 21 09 29 29* ***Rooms*** *63*

This excellent, ultramodern hotel is right on the seafront. The guest rooms are airy, many with a view. The rooms are fully adapted for disabled guests. The restaurant, with its impressive view, serves traditional local food, including seafood and steak. **www.hotelneptuneberck.com**

BOULOGNE-SUR-MER Hôtel Hamiot €€

1 rue Faidherbe, 62200 ***Tel*** *03 21 31 44 20* ***Fax*** *03 21 83 71 56* ***Rooms*** *12*

This lively portside hotel-restaurant has refurbished but somewhat old-fashioned rooms with plain walls, colored bedspreads, and dark furniture. The soundproofing is good. The Grand Restaurant has an excellent menu and a view; the less expensive Brasserie has a busy terrace. **www.hotelhamiot.com**

CALAIS Kyriad €

Digue G Berthe, 62100 ***Tel*** *03 21 34 64 64* ***Fax*** *03 21 34 35 39* ***Rooms*** *44*

Right on the beach, behind lines of old-fashioned bathing huts, is this modern hotel-restaurant. The guest rooms accommodate up to three people and are wheelchair-accessible. The restaurant has a changing menu. **www.hotel-plage-calais.com**

CAMBRAI Château de la Motte Fénelon P 🍴 🌳 €

Square Château, 59400 ***Tel*** *03 27 83 61 38* ***Fax*** *03 27 83 71 61* ***Rooms*** *40*

Set in its own gardens, this 1850s château is handsomely decorated with grand guest rooms in the main building, and more modest rooms in the annexes. There is also a tennis court. The restaurant serves excellent traditional cuisine in a brick-vaulted cellar. **www.cambrai-chateau-motte-fenelon.com**

CHANTILLY-GOUVIEUX Château de la Tour P 🍴 ≋ 🚸 🌳 €€€€

Chemin de la Chaussée, 60270 ***Tel*** *03 44 62 38 38* ***Fax*** *03 44 57 31 97* ***Rooms*** *41*

Just 20 minutes from Charles de Gaulle airport, this imposing *fin-de-siècle* residence and its matching extension is a haven of luxury set in 12 acres of grounds. The dining room has beautiful wood flooring. There is a pleasant terrace, and facilities for disabled guests. **www.lechateaudelatour.fr**

DOUAI La Terrasse P 🍴 ♿ €€

36 Terrasse St Pierre, 59500 ***Tel*** *03 22 85 04 43* ***Fax*** *03 22 8506 69* ***Rooms*** *24*

This charming hotel has a sophisticated low-key interior, and the owners' passion for painting is evident in the many canvases that grace the walls. The excellent restaurant offers a wide range of fish dishes according to the catch of the day, and the cellar is stocked with a fine selection of vintage wines. **www.laterrasse.fr**

DUNKIRK Hôtel La Reserve 🍴 €

82 quai des Hollandais, 59140 ***Tel*** *03 28 66 50 21* ***Fax*** *03 28 66 74 44* ***Rooms*** *12*

This small, reliable hotel in the center of the town was renovated in 2007 by the new owners. The attractive rooms overlook the Yacht basin, and on the ground floor there is a popular, reasonably priced restaurant serving a wide range of fish dishes. **la.reserve@orange.fr**

FERE-EN-TARDENOIS Château de Fère P 🍴 ≋ 🚸 🌳 €€€

Rte de Fismes, 02130 ***Tel*** *03 23 82 21 13* ***Fax*** *03 23 82 37 81* ***Rooms*** *19 (plus 7 suites)*

In the background of this 16th-century hotel, set in vast grounds, are the ruins of the medieval castle of Anne de Montmorency. Each guest room here is unique, and the two dining rooms are splendid – with an amazing wine cellar, which can be visited. There are full facilities for disabled visitors. **www.chateaudefere.com**

GOSNAY La Chartreuse du Val de St Esprit ⇅ P 🍴 🚸 🌳 ☰ €€€

1 rue de Fouquières, 62199 ***Tel*** *03 21 62 80 00* ***Fax*** *03 21 62 42 50* ***Rooms*** *63*

On the outskirts of Béthune, this hotel is housed in an elegant château dating from 1764. Spacious guest rooms overlook the tree-filled park. There are three restaurants: the Chartreuse for the gourmet, Robert II for traditional cuisine, and Le Vasco for trendier guests. **www.lachartreuse.com**

HARDELOT PLAGE Hôtel du Parc ⇅ P 🍴 ≋ 🚸 ♿ €€

111 av François Ier, 62152 ***Tel*** *03 21 33 22 11* ***Fax*** *03 21 83 29 71* ***Rooms*** *81*

A bright, airy, and contemporary hotel with rooms that have balconies or terraces overlooking extensive grounds. The hotel is located less than 30-minutes' drive from fashionable Le Touquet and within easy reach of the coast and two neighboring golf courses. There is also a good restaurant. **www.hotelduparc-hardelot.com**

LAON-VILLE HAUTE Hôtel La Bannière de France P 🍴 ♿ €€

11 rue Franklin Roosevelt, 02000 ***Tel*** *03 23 23 21 44* ***Fax*** *03 23 23 31 56* ***Rooms*** *18*

Housed in a coaching inn dating from 1685, this hotel provides a good base for exploring the ancient city of Laon. The excellent guest rooms have been refurbished. The dining room combines classic cuisine with old-world charm. **www.hoteldelabannieredefrance.com**

LE TOUQUET Hôtel Blue Cottage P 🍴 €€€

41 rue Jean Monnet, 62520 ***Tel*** *03 21 05 15 33* ***Fax*** *03 21 05 41 60* ***Rooms*** *25*

This contemporary hotel stands in the center of town, near the beach. It is close to the covered market and the lively rue St Jean. The rooms are spacious and modern; nonsmoking rooms are also available. The restaurant rotates its menu daily, with a buffet in the evenings. **www.blue-cottage.com**

LILLE Hôtel Kanai ☰ €€

10 rue de Bethune, 59000 ***Tel*** *03 20 57 14 78* ***Fax*** *03 20 57 06 01* ***Rooms*** *31*

An elegant arcaded front marks the entrance to this entirely refurbished hotel situated next to the excellent Christmas market. The moderately priced rooms are decorated in a pleasingly modern style. A library offers the day's newspapers. Children under 13 stay free. **www.hotelkanai.com**

LILLE Alliance Couvent des Minimes ⇅ P 🍴 ☰ €€€€

17 quai du Wault, 59000 ***Tel*** *03 20 30 62 62* ***Fax*** *03 20 42 94 25* ***Rooms*** *80*

This converted 17th-century convent combines ancient and modern elements. Traditional Flemish brick arches surround the dining room with its sensational roof, while the guest rooms have benefited from the best of modern design. Some rooms are equipped for disabled guests. **www.alliance-lille.com**

LONGPONT Hôtel de l'Abbaye P 🍴 €

8 rue des Tourelles, 02600 ***Tel*** *03 23 96 02 44* ***Fax*** *03 23 96 02 44* ***Rooms*** *11*

Located between Soissons and Villers-Cotterets, this hotel is named after the 12th-century abbey opposite, and is nearly as old. The guest rooms are old-fashioned and comfortable. The popular restaurant serves *cuisine du terroir*, grillades, and game in winter. **www.hotel-abbaye-longpont.fr**

LUMBRES Moulin de Mombreux P 🍴 €€

Rte de Beyenghem, 62380 ***Tel*** *03 21 39 62 44* ***Fax*** *03 21 93 61 34* ***Rooms*** *24*

This romantic 18th-century mill, hidden in its own grounds on the banks of the river Bléquin, works its charm on all who visit. Guests fall asleep to the sound of a waterfall. The restaurant is furnished with antiques and fine exposed beams. **www.moulindemombreux.com**

MAUBEUGE Hôtel Shakespeare ⇅ P 🍴 ♿ €

3 rue du Commerce, 59600 ***Tel*** *03 27 65 14 14* ***Fax*** *03 27 64 04 66* ***Rooms*** *35*

This is a functional and efficiently run hotel with friendly staff where you can stay without breaking the bank. It has an old-style exterior with a covered terrace for the bistro restaurant, which features a selection of grilled food. **www.shakespearehotelmaubeuge.fr**

MONTREUIL Le Darnétal 🍴 €

Pl Poissonerie, 62170 ***Tel*** *03 21 06 04 87* ***Fax*** *03 21 86 64 67* ***Rooms*** *4*

A small hotel in the upper town of Montreuil, the rooms here are old-fashioned. The auberge is decorated with a host of pictures, knick knacks, and copper ornaments. It also has a popular traditional restaurant, which specializes in fresh fish; reserve ahead. **www.darnetal-montreuil.com**

MONTREUIL Château de Montreuil P ≋ ▤ €€€€

4 chaussée des Capucins, 62170 ***Tel*** *03 21 81 53 04* ***Fax*** *03 21 81 36 43* ***Rooms*** *18*

The only relais château in Nord Pas de Calais, this elegant manor house is located inside the ramparts of the Montreuil that was once on the sea, before the sea retreated. There are lovely gardens, and a fine restaurant with an excellent wine list. **www.chateaudemontreuil.com**

REUILLY-SAUVIGNY L'Auberge le Relais P 🍴 ▤ €€

2 rue de Paris, 02850 ***Tel*** *03 23 70 35 36* ***Fax*** *03 23 70 27 76* ***Rooms*** *7*

A good base for visiting the champagne cellars just over the border, as well as in Epernay and Reims, this hotel-restaurant has pretty, brightly colored rooms and a pleasant conservatory overlooking a lovely garden. There is also an excellent gourmet restaurant. **www.relaisreuilly.com**

SARS-POTERIE Hôtel du Marquais P ⛱ €

65 rue Général de Gaulle, 59216 ***Tel*** *03 27 61 62 72* ***Fax*** *03 27 57 47 35* ***Rooms*** *11*

Originally part of a series of farm buildings, this is now a friendly, family-run hotel. The modern color scheme complements the antique furniture and photographs. On sunny days, breakfast is served in the garden. There is also a private tennis court. **www.hoteldumarquais.com**

ST OMER Hôtel St-Louis P 🍴 ▤ €

25 rue d'Arras, 62500 ***Tel*** *03 21 38 35 21* ***Fax*** *03 21 38 57 26* ***Rooms*** *30*

At this stone-built former coaching inn you can see the arches where horses and carriages were led through to the stables. The hotel, which is well placed to visit St Omer, has disabled access, and the rooms in the annex have been refurbished. There is also a brasserie. **www.hotel-saintlouis.com**

ST QUENTIN Hôtel des Canonniers P €

15 rue des Canonniers, 02100 ***Tel*** *03 23 62 87 87* ***Fax*** *03 23 62 87 86* ***Rooms*** *14*

An old townhouse has been elegantly converted into a comfortable, family hotel. It is surprisingly quiet despite being in the center of St Quentin. Large spacious individual rooms with period features and some suites for families. Breakfast is served in a courtyard garden on fine days. **www.hotel-canonniers.com**

VERVINS La Tour du Roy P 🍴 ▤ €€

45 rue du Général Leclerc, 02140 ***Tel*** *03 23 98 00 11* ***Fax*** *03 23 98 00 72* ***Rooms*** *22*

Steeped in history, this prestigious 17th-century château with its three towers was the site of German army headquarters in 1870, 1914, and 1940. General de Gaulle stayed here in 1956. The château has stately bedrooms, and a fine restaurant. **www.latourduroy.com**

WIMEREUX Hôtel St Jean ⇅ P ▤ ♿ €€

1 rue Georges Romain, 62930 ***Tel*** *03 21 83 57 40* ***Fax*** *03 21 91 62 97* ***Rooms*** *24*

Located in the city center, this hotel is situated within an attractive old building. Rooms are well decorated and brightly colored. There is a spa and sauna for hotel guests and a golf course 1.5 miles (3 km) away. The bar is available 24 hours a day. Space for parking is limited so reserve in advance. **www.hotel-saint-jean.fr**

CHAMPAGNE

BAZEILLES L'Auberge du Port P 🍴 🚸 €

Rte de Remilly, 08140 ***Tel*** *03 24 27 13 89* ***Fax*** *03 24 29 35 58* ***Rooms*** *20*

This quiet country hotel just outside the historic city of Sedan has pleasing flower-filled gardens by the river Meuse, a theme reflected by the flowery fabrics in the newly renovated guest rooms. The restaurant overlooks the river and surrounding countryside and there is a lovely veranda. Closed August 2–22. **www.auberge-du-port.fr**

CHALONS-EN-CHAMPAGNE Hôtel du Pot d'Etain ⇅ P €

18 pl de la République, 51000 ***Tel*** *03 26 68 09 09* ***Fax*** *03 26 68 58 18* ***Rooms*** *29*

Right in the center of Châlons-en-Champagne in the heart of the champagne vineyards, this hotel is housed in an attractive building dating from the 15th century. The pleasant, renovated bedrooms are furnished with antiques. Enjoy homemade pastries and croissants for breakfast. **www.hotel-lepotdetain.com**

CHAMPILLON Royal Champagne P 🍴 🧒 ▤ ♿ €€€€

Bellevue, 51160 ***Tel*** *03 26 52 87 11* ***Fax*** *03 26 52 89 69* ***Rooms*** *25*

The ideal retreat for Champagne enthusiasts, this former coaching inn is now a relais château with a first-class reputation as a hotel and restaurant. The elegant bedrooms offer superb views over the vineyards and the Valley of the Marne. The wine list is outstanding. **www.royalchampagne.com**

CHARLEVILLE-MEZIERES Hôtel de Paris P €

24 av Georges Corneau, 08000 ***Tel*** *03 24 33 34 38* ***Fax*** *03 24 59 11 21* ***Rooms*** *27*

Le Paris is just 5 minutes from the center of the capital of the French Ardennes and its fine main square – the place Ducale. Fronted by a bourgeois residence, the hotel occupies three separate buildings. The modern rooms have been insulated for sound. Nearby are restaurants. **www.hoteldeparis08.fr**

COLOMBEY-LES-DEUX-EGLISES La Grange du Relais P 🍴 ≋ ♿ €

26 route Nationale 19, 52330 ***Tel*** *03 25 02 03 89* ***Fax*** *03 25 01 51 81* ***Rooms*** *10*

Excellent refurbished country auberge, located just a short walk from the home of Charles de Gaulle and the memorial in his honor. This is a good base to visit Clairvaux abbey and the General's favorite champagne house, Drappier, in Urville. The quiet, spacious rooms are housed in the ancient stables. **www.lagrangedurelais.fr**

COURCELLES-SUR-VESLE Château de Courcelles P 🍴 ≋ 🧒 🍸 ▤ €€€€

8 rue du Château, 02220 ***Tel*** *03 23 74 13 53* ***Fax*** *03 23 74 06 41* ***Rooms*** *18*

A very special hotel, this perfect Louis XIV château was built in the 1690s. The buildings have been splendidly restored, with a fine restaurant, a special wine list, 20 hectares of parkland, good sports facilities, and disabled access. The trees still display shrapnel from World War I. **www.chateau-de-courcelles.fr**

EPERNAY Hôtel de la Cloche 🍴 €

3 pl Mendès-France, 51200 ***Tel*** *03 26 55 15 15* ***Fax*** *03 26 55 64 88* ***Rooms*** *19*

The best value inexpensive hotel in Epernay, the Hôtel de la Cloche is just a few meters from the church of Notre Dame and a short walk to the avenue de Champagne, where the famous names have their establishments. Guest rooms are bright with modern furnishings. **www.hotel-la-cloche.com**

EPERNAY Hôtel Villa Eugène ⇅ P ≋ 🧒 ▤ €€

82–84 av de Champagne, 51200 ***Tel*** *03 26 32 44 76* ***Fax*** *03 26 32 44 98* ***Rooms*** *15*

This elegant 19th-century residence lies close to the famous Epernay champagne houses. The hotel has been sensitively refurbished with individually styled rooms; all are handsome, spacious, and luxurious. Breakfast can be enjoyed in the luminous conservatory. **www.villa-eugene.com**

ETOGES Château d'Etoges P 🍴 🧒 ▤ ♿ €€€€

4 rue Richebourg, 51270 ***Tel*** *03 26 59 30 08* ***Fax*** *03 26 59 35 57* ***Rooms*** *27*

Now a grand private hotel *(chambre d'hôte)*, the original medieval fortress was converted to a fairytale castle in the 17th century with fountains, much admired by Louis XIV. The building is protected by the *monuments historiques*. There is an excellent restaurant, and guests may use a boat on the moat. **www.etoges.com**

FAGNON Abbaye des Sept Fontaines P 🍴 🧒 €€

Fagnon, 08090 ***Tel*** *03 24 37 38 24* ***Fax*** *03 24 37 58 75* ***Rooms*** *23*

Originally a 12th-century monastery, rebuilt in 1693, this château hotel has the distinction of having hosted Marshal Foch, Emperor William II of Germany, and General de Gaulle. There is a huge lawn and a childrens' play area, an 18-hole golf course, a restaurant, and a quiet terrace. **www.abbayeseptfontaines.fr**

GIVET Les Reflets Jaunes ⇅ P 🧒 ▤ €

2 rue Général de Gaulle, 08600 ***Tel*** *03 24 42 85 85* ***Fax*** *03 24 42 85 86* ***Rooms*** *17*

Recently refurbished with disabled access, Les Reflets Jaune stands in the center of this frontier town near Belgium. The city was fortified by Vauban and was the birthplace of Etienne Méhul, composer of the revolutionary song *Le Chant du Départ*. Restaurants are nearby. **www.les-reflets-jaunes.com**

HAYBES SUR MEUSE l'Ermitage Moulin Labotte P 🍴 €

52 rue Edmond Dromart, 08170 ***Tel*** *03 24 41 13 44* ***Fax*** *03 24 40 46 72* ***Rooms*** *10*

In the heart of the Ardennes forest, this mill dating from the end of the 18th century houses a hotel and restaurant. The great cogs from the mill still adorn the dining room. Comfortable guest rooms are furnished in traditional style. The restaurant serves local cuisine. **www.moulin-labotte.com**

LANGRES Grand Hôtel de l'Europe P 🍴 €€

23 rue Diderot, 52200 ***Tel*** *03 25 87 10 88* ***Fax*** *03 25 87 60 65* ***Rooms*** *26*

An old coaching inn on the main street of this attractive town, the Grand Hôtel de l'Europe has simple refurbished guest rooms, which are quieter at the back. The restaurant serves typical country food. Langres was the birthplace of Diderot, editor of the famous encyclopedia. **www.grand-hotel-europe-langres.federal-hotel.com**

MAGNANT Le Val Moret

P 🍴 🚸 ♿ €

10110 ***Tel*** *03 25 29 85 12* ***Fax*** *03 25 29 70 81* ***Rooms*** *42*

This pretty, flower bedecked modern motel on the A5 from Troyes to Dijon is ideally placed to explore the Champagne route in Aube and Nigloland entertainment park for children. There is secure parking. The restaurant is good, with a recognized chef and quality wine list. **www.le-val-moret.com**

MESNIL-ST-PERE Auberge du Lac - Au Vieux Pressoir

P 🍴 ☰ ♿ €

5 rue du 28 Août 1944, 10140 ***Tel*** *03 25 41 27 16* ***Fax*** *03 25 41 57 59* ***Rooms*** *21*

A typical half-timbered Champagne house in a village on the edge of the Lac d'Orient, Europe's biggest manmade lake, this hotel provides fantastic bird-watching opportunities, especially in April and September. The hotel is accessible for disabled guests, with a good restaurant. **www.auberge-du-lac.fr**

MOUSSEY Domaine de la Creuse

P €€

10800 ***Tel*** *03 25 41 74 01* ***Fax*** *03 25 73 13 87* ***Rooms*** *5*

Stunning rural *chambre d'hôte* in a beautifully modernized 18th-century courtyard-style farm, typical of this part of the Aube-en-Champagne. It is a 10-minute drive from the Michelin-starred restaurant, La Parentale. The combination is hard to beat as a base to explore this attractive area. **www.domainedelacreuse.com**

REIMS Hôtel Crystal

⇅ P €

86 place Drouet d'Erlon, 51100 ***Tel*** *03 26 88 44 44* ***Fax*** *03 26 47 49 28* ***Rooms*** *31*

This 1920s hotel in the busiest part of Reims is surprisingly quiet, with pleasantly decorated rooms. The lobby and elevator retain their Art Deco style, and there is a garden, where breakfast is served in summer. The nearby place Drouet Derlon has a choice of restaurants. **www.hotel-crystal.fr**

REIMS Hôtel de la Paix

⇅ P 🏊 🚸 🏋 ☰ ♿ €€€

9 rue de Buirette, 51100 ***Tel*** *03 26 40 04 08* ***Fax*** *03 26 09 57 07* ***Rooms*** *169*

This fine hotel is in the heart the city, within walking distance of the cathedral, the best restaurants, and the high-speed rail station. The elegant central courtyard blends 15th-century architecture with modern touches, and is ideal for a drink or breakfast in fine weather. Spacious lounge and Champagne bar. **www.bestwestern-lapaix-reims.com**

REIMS Château Les Crayères

⇅ P 🍴 🚸 ☰ ♿ €€€€€

64 bd Henry Vasnier, 51100 ***Tel*** *03 26 82 80 80* ***Fax*** *03 26 82 65 52* ***Rooms*** *20*

Superbly aristocratic château with every luxury set in an English-style park next to the Roman *crayères* – the wine cellars of the Champagne houses which have been cut into the chalk. There is a superb restaurant, one of the best in France. **www.lescrayeres.com**

SEDAN Le Château Fort

⇅ P 🍴 €€

Port des Princes, 08200 ***Tel*** *03 24 26 11 00* ***Fax*** *03 24 27 19 00* ***Rooms*** *54*

For years no one knew what to do with Europe's largest fortress. Now it hosts an exceptional hotel, under the banner of France Patrimoine, restored to the highest standards of the *monuments historiques*. Some rooms have disabled access, and there is a good restaurant. **www.hotelfp-sedan.com**

SEPT SAULX le Cheval Blanc

P 🍴 €€

2 rue Moulin, 51400 ***Tel*** *03 26 03 90 27* ***Fax*** *03 26 03 97 09* ***Rooms*** *24*

Between Reims and Chalons en Champagne in the middle of prestigious vineyards, this excellent hotel is attractively furnished. The rooms open on to the delightful gardens on the river Vesle. The beautifully presented restaurant has a terrace with flowers. Hotel is closed Feb, & Tue from Oct-Apr. **www.chevalblanc-sept-saulx.com**

ST-DIZIER Le Gambetta

⇅ P 🍴 ♿ €

62 rue Gambetta, 52100 ***Tel*** *03 25 56 52 10* ***Fax*** *03 25 56 39 47* ***Rooms*** *63*

This modern hotel in the center of St-Dizier offers great value for money. Disabled guests are catered for. Breakfast is served as a buffet and guests can relax in the bar or lounge. Many guests are drawn to the bird-watching opportunities at the nearby Lac du Der-Chantecoq.

TROYES Champs des Oiseaux

P €€€

20 rue Linard Gonthier, 10000 ***Tel*** *03 25 80 58 50* ***Fax*** *03 25 80 98 34* ***Rooms*** *12*

The finest hotel in Troyes, this is located by the cathedral in the town center. The sheer charm of the restored 15th- and 16th-century buildings as well as top service never fail to impress. The planted courtyards and brick half-timbered walls make for a memorable stay. Snacks are served. **www.champdesoiseaux.com**

TROYES La Maison de Rhodes

P ♿ €€€

18 rue Linard Gonthier, 10000 ***Tel*** *03 25 43 11 11* ***Fax*** *03 25 43 10 43* ***Rooms*** *11*

A sister hotel to the Champ des Oiseaux, this is almost as grand, with stunningly restored 16th-century architecture, including brick and timber galleries and stairways. Though a newer hotel, it is just as popular. The hotel has disabled access, and a restaurant for guests who reserve a table. **www.maisonderhodes.com**

VIGNORY Le Relais Verdoyant

P 🍴 🚸 €

Quartier de la Gare, 52320 ***Tel*** *03 25 02 44 49* ***Fax*** *03 25 01 96 89* ***Rooms*** *7*

Just outside the village of Vignory, this converted farm in a peaceful hamlet makes for a relaxing stay. It is a few kilometers from Colombey les Deux Eglises, where the great cross of Lorraine marks the resting place of Général de Gaulle. Excellent, reasonably priced restaurant. **www.le-relais-verdoyant.fr**

WILLIERS Chez Odette
P 🍴 €€€

Rue Principale, 08110 ***Tel*** *03 24 55 49 55* ***Fax*** *03 24 55 49 59* ***Rooms*** *9*

Right by the Belgian border, this recently opened hotel is an exercise in contrasts – on the outside it looks like a country family hotel and bistro, but inside it is startlingly elegant, with ultramodern decor and furnishings. There is a gastronomic restaurant, a bistro, and a bar. **www.chez-odette.com**

ALSACE & LORRAINE

COLMAR Hôtel St Martin
⇅ ☰ €€

38 grand' rue, 68000 ***Tel*** *03 89 24 11 51* ***Fax*** *03 89 23 47 78* ***Rooms*** *40*

Near the Schwendi fountain in the middle of Alsace's most picturesque town, this hotel comprises three houses dating from the 14th and 17th centuries and an inner courtyard with a Renaissance stair turret. There are a number of good restaurants on the doorstep. **www.hotel-saint-martin.com**

COLMAR Hostellerie Le Marechal
⇅ 🍴 ☰ €€€

4 pl Six Montagnes Noires, 68000 ***Tel*** *03 89 41 60 32* ***Fax*** *03 89 24 59 40* ***Rooms*** *30*

This luxurious 16th- and 17th-century house, by the river Lauch in the old part of the city, is home to the Hostellerie Le Marechal. Some of the guest rooms have four-poster beds and views of the canal. The candlelit restaurant, A L'Echevin, faces the canal. **www.le-marechal.com**

DIEVE Hostellerie du Château des Monthairons
⇅ P 🍴 🚸 €€

Monthairons, 55320 ***Tel*** *03 29 87 78 55* ***Fax*** *03 29 87 73 49* ***Rooms*** *25*

This grand 19th-century château is in its own walled grounds, south of Verdun. Its features include two chapels, a heronry, and a private beach on the Meuse. First-floor rooms are furnished with antiques; the others are modern. The restaurant has a terrace overlooking the countryside. **www.chateaudesmonthairons.com**

DRACHENBRONN Auberge du Moulin des 7 Fontaines
P 🍴 €

1 sept Fontaines, 67160 ***Tel*** *03 88 94 50 90* ***Fax*** *03 88 94 54 57* ***Rooms*** *12*

Hidden in the forest, this auberge is run by the Finck family in typical rural Alsace style. The old-style bedrooms are situated in the converted 18th-century mill. There are exceptional-value meals on the terrace in summer. It is a great favorite with hikers. **www.auberge7fontaines.com**

EGUISHEIM Hostellerie du Pape
⇅ 🍴 €€

10 grand rue, 68420 ***Tel*** *03 89 41 41 21* ***Fax*** *03 89 41 41 31* ***Rooms*** *33*

This hotel is a former *maison de vigneron*, a wine-grower's house with vine-covered balconies. It is named in honor of Pope Leon IX, who was born in the village in 1002. His statue is nearby. The restaurant serves traditional local dishes. **www.hostellerie-pape.com**

GERARDMER Le Grand Hôtel
⇅ P 🍴 ≋ 🏋 ♿ €€

Place du Tilleul, 88400 ***Tel*** *03 29 63 06 31* ***Fax*** *03 29 63 46 81* ***Rooms*** *75*

This may be the oldest hotel in Gerardmer but it has a thoroughly modern luxury feel. The charming decor chimes perfectly with the traditional Vosges setting. There is a relaxing garden, two pools, and three restaurants. Nearby you'll find the famous lake, mountain scenery, and low-land skiing. **www.grandhotel-gerardmer.com**

GUNDERSHOFFEN Le Moulin
P 🍴 🚸 ☰ ♿ €€

7 rue du Moulin, 67110 ***Tel*** *03 88 07 33 30* ***Fax*** *03 88 72 86 47* ***Rooms*** *12*

A really beautiful conversion of a picturesque water mill has resulted in this unexpected *hotel de charme* on the edge of the northern Vosges. Rooms are authentic and comfortable and the hotel also has a very popular Michelin-starred restaurant, Le Cygne. Convenient for Strasbourg and the Maginot Line. **www.hotellemoulin.com**

JUNGHOLZ Les Violettes
⇅ P 🍴 ≋ 🚸 🏋 ☰ ♿ €€€

Route de Thierenbach, 68500 ***Tel*** *03 89 76 91 19* ***Fax*** *03 89 74 29 12* ***Rooms*** *22*

This is an imaginative and luxurious reconstruction of a charming sandstone Alsacien hotel. It has the feel and welcome of a large family home. A conservatory overlooks the surrounding countryside and there is a huge spa with saunas, hammams, two pools, and a Jacuzzi. The restaurant is highly recommended. **www.les-violettes.com**

KAYSERSBERG Hôtel Constantin
⇅ P €

10 rue Père Kohlman, 68240 ***Tel*** *03 89 47 19 90* ***Fax*** *03 89 47 37 82* ***Rooms*** *20*

A beautifully restored 17th-century house in the center of the old town conceals a hotel that has been modernized to create stylish rooms. Breakfast is served in the conservatory; other meals are available next door at the Relais du Château, owned by the same family. **www.hotel-constantin.com**

LA PETITE PIERRE Aux Trois Roses
⇅ P 🍴 ≋ 🚸 🏋 €€

19 rue Principale, 67290 ***Tel*** *03 88 89 89 00* ***Fax*** *03 88 70 41 28* ***Rooms*** *40*

This hotel is in an 18th-century house in the middle of this attractive hilltop village. Some of the pleasant rooms have balconies, and there is a guest lounge with an open fire. Excellent value for money. The dining room serves traditional Vosgien dishes. The village is home to the Maison du Parc. **www.aux-trois-roses.com**

LAPOUTROIE Les Alisiers

P 🍴 €€

5 rue du Faudé, 68650 ***Tel*** *03 89 47 52 82* ***Fax*** *03 89 47 22 38* ***Rooms*** *16*

This attractive hotel has grown out of a pretty converted farm dating from 1819. The refurbished guest rooms are decorated in country style. The terrace has fabulous views of the hills and valleys. From the dining room you can enjoy the excellent food and the view at the same time. **www.alisiers.com**

LUNEVILLE Château d'Adoménil

P 🍴 ≋ 🚸 ☰ €€€

54300 ***Tel*** *03 83 74 04 81* ***Fax*** *03 83 74 21 78* ***Rooms*** *14*

This imposing Relais Château in an extensive park on the river Meurthe is not far from the 18th-century splendors of Nancy. The guest rooms are splendidly bourgeois in the château itself or Provençal in theme in the beautiful outbuildings. The restaurant is a gourmet rendezvous. **www.adomenil.com**

METZ Grand Hôtel de Metz

⇅ P €€

3 rue des Clercs, 57000 ***Tel*** *03 87 36 16 33* ***Fax*** *03 87 74 17 04* ***Rooms*** *62*

A stylish hotel on a pedestrianized street in the center of this fine, underrated city, with French and Prussian architecture. The hotel is an interesting combination of Baroque entrance hall and rustic rooms, near the cathedral and the covered market. Good restaurants are nearby. **www.hotel-metz.com**

NANCY Grand Hôtel de la Reine

⇅ P 🍴 ☰ €€€

2 pl Stanislas, 54000 ***Tel*** *03 83 35 03 01* ***Fax*** *03 83 32 86 04* ***Rooms*** *42*

Experience the Ancien Régime in Europe's finest Neoclassical square – the stunningly restored place Stanislas. The hotel occupies the house originally built in 1752 for the steward to Stanislas, Duke of Lorraine, the last king of Poland. A host of famous visitors includes Tsar Alexander I of Russia. **www.hoteldelareine.com**

OBERNAI Hôtel Restaurant des Vosges

⇅ 🍴 €

5 pl de la Gare, 67210 ***Tel*** *03 88 95 53 78* ***Fax*** *03 88 49 92 65* ***Rooms*** *20*

A cheerful and welcoming small hotel by the train station, this is a mixture of old and modern buildings with a pleasant, traditional atmosphere. The rooms are exceptionally well kept. The restaurant is a cross between traditional Alsace and bistro style. **www.hotel-obernai.com**

REMIREMONT Hôtel du Cheval de Bronze

🚸 €

59 rue Charles de Gaulle, 88200 ***Tel*** *03 29 62 52 24* ***Fax*** *03 29 62 34 90* ***Rooms*** *35*

A former coaching inn, set behind the 17th-century arcades of this attractive town in the foothills of the Vosges, this simple provincial hotel is ideal for visiting the Vosges mountains. The Ballon d'Alsace is an easy drive, as is the World War I mountain battlefield Hartmannswillerkopf.

SAVERNE Chez Jean

⇅ P 🍴 €€

3 rue Gare, 67700 ***Tel*** *03 88 91 10 19* ***Fax*** *03 88 91 27 45* ***Rooms*** *25*

A four-story traditional Alsace house in the center of town, this was once a convent. The rooms are tastefully decorated in local style. There are good views of the surrounding hills. There is a sauna for guests' use. The Winstubs' Rosestiebele restaurant is on the ground floor. **www.chez-jean.com**

SELESTAT Auberge des Alliés

🍴 €

39 rue des Chevaliers, 67600 ***Tel*** *03 88 92 09 34* ***Fax*** *03 88 92 12 88* ***Rooms*** *17*

Set in the old town, part of this hotel-restaurant occupies a house dating from 1537. The city contained one of the finest schools in Europe; its unique library holds the *Cosmographiae Introductio*, with the first reference to America in print. Rooms are small and simple, with old-fashioned decor. **www.auberge-des-allies.com**

SELESTAT Hostellerie Abbaye de la Pommeraie

⇅ P 🍴 ☰ €€€

8 av Maréchal Foch, 67600 ***Tel*** *03 88 92 07 84* ***Fax*** *03 88 92 08 71* ***Rooms*** *13*

In the old city of Selestat, famous for its centuries-old library, this fine 17th-century building was once part of the medieval Baumgarten Abbey. The guest rooms are everything you would expect of a Relais Château, and there are two very good restaurants. **www.pommeraie.fr**

STRASBOURG Au Cerf d'Or

⇅ 🍴 ≋ 🚸 ☰ €€

6 pl de l'Hôpital, 67000 ***Tel*** *03 88 36 20 05* ***Fax*** *03 88 36 68 67* ***Rooms*** *43*

An inexpensive base for visiting the sights of old Strasbourg, this old-style, half-timbered Alsace family hotel has refurbished rooms throughout. The main hotel has more charming rooms, but the annex has a small pool and a sauna. There are several restaurants on the nearby waterfront. **www.cerf-dor.com**

STRASBOURG Hôtel Chut

🍴 ♿ €€

4 rue du Bain aux Plantes, 67000 ***Tel*** *03 88 32 05 06* ***Fax*** *03 88 32 05 50* ***Rooms*** *8*

Two picturesque 16th-century half-timbered houses make up this hotel in the historic Petite France quarter of old Strasbourg. Within, old and contemporary have been successfully blended and a Zen ambience pervades. There is a good restaurant, and parking is possible by arrangement. One room has wheelchair access. **www.hote-strasbourg.fr**

VENTRON Les Buttes - L'Ermitage

⇅ P 🍴 ≋ 🚸 ♿ €€

L'Ermitage Frère Joseph, 88310 ***Tel*** *03 29 24 18 09* ***Fax*** *03 29 24 21 96* ***Rooms*** *62*

Two hotels in one in the Parc Naturel Régionale des Ballons des Vosges, a protected part of the Vosges at the foot of the mountains. Les Buttes has a gastronomic restaurant, while simpler, traditional food is served at the Ermitage. These hotels make an ideal base for skiing in winter or mountain walking in summer. **www.frerejo.com**

Key to Price Guide *see p550* **Key to Symbols** *see back cover flap*

NORMANDY

AGNEAUX Château d'Agneaux

P 🍴 ♿ €€

Av Ste Marie, 50180 ***Tel*** *02 33 57 65 88* ***Fax*** *02 33 56 59 21* ***Rooms*** *12*

A 13th-century château hotel nestled in the intensely rural Vire Valley. Individual rooms preserve the character of the hotel with period furniture, parquet flooring, and wooden paneling. Two restaurants are housed in the medieval farm buildings. Equidistant from Mont-St-Michel, the Cotentin Peninsula, and the Normandy beaches. **www.chateau-agneaux.fr**

ALENÇON Hôtel le Chapeau Rouge

P ≡ €

3 bd Duchamp, 61000 ***Tel*** *02 33 26 20 23* ***Fax*** *02 33 26 54 05* ***Rooms*** *14*

This modern, serviceable hotel was built in the 1960s. Just 10 minutes' walk from the town center at a busy intersection, the rooms have insulated windows to muffle the traffic noise. The decor is stylish and classic, and the rooms are well equipped. There is a relaxed atmosphere. **www.lechapeaurouge.fr**

AUDRIEU Château d'Audrieu

P 🍴 ≋ 🚸 €€€€€

Le Château, 14250 ***Tel*** *02 31 80 21 52* ***Fax*** *02 31 80 24 73* ***Rooms*** *29*

This 18th-century château was transformed into a luxurious hotel in 1976. A short distance from Bayeux, it has an immense park, providing wonderful views. The stunning guest rooms are elegantly furnished with period pieces. There is an excellent gourmet restaurant. The hotel is closed mid-Dec–Jan. **www.chateaudaudrieu.com**

BAGNOLES-DE-L'ORNE Le Manoir du Lys

⇅ P 🍴 ≋ 🚸 ≡ ♿ €€

Route de Juvigny, 61140 ***Tel*** *02 33 37 80 69* ***Fax*** *02 33 30 05 80* ***Rooms*** *30*

A family *hotel de charme* offering childrens' breakfast, baby-sitting services (48 hours' notice), and transportation to the station at Bagnoles sur Orne. There is plenty to do for the active – bike riding, climbing, and tennis; and for the not so active there's billiards, ping pong, golf, cooking weekends, and a local casino. **www.manoir-du-lys.fr**

CABOURG Castel Fleuri

€€

4 av Alfred Piat, 14390 ***Tel*** *02 31 91 27 57* ***Fax*** *02 31 24 03 48* ***Rooms*** *22*

A welcoming, unsophisticated *hotel de charme* with smallish but nicely decorated rooms and some family suites. Well placed in the town center just 650 ft (200 meters) from the beach in this fashionable seaside resort. The pleasant garden is an added bonus. **www.castel-fleuri.com**

CAEN Best Western Le Dauphin

⇅ P 🍴 🚸 🍸 ♿ €€

29 rue Gémare, 14000 ***Tel*** *02 31 86 22 26* ***Fax*** *02 31 86 35 14* ***Rooms*** *37*

In a quiet but central location, this old priory has been tastefully renovated, retaining original features such as the arched windows and stone walls. The rooms are comfortable; nonsmoking and family rooms are available. There is a breakfast buffet, and a gourmet restaurant. **www.le-dauphin-normandie.com**

CAEN Hôtel Mercure Porte de Plaisance

⇅ P 🍴 🚸 ≡ €€€

1 rue Courtonne, 14000 ***Tel*** *02 31 47 24 24* ***Fax*** *02 31 47 43 88* ***Rooms*** *129*

An atmosphere of quiet elegance pervades, with every attention paid to the guests' comfort. The rooms of this chain hotel, centrally located opposite the harbor, are cozy and tastefully furnished. Disabled guests are catered for, and there is parking for an additional charge. **www.accor.com**

CAMBREMER Château les Bruyères

P 🍴 ≋ ♿ €€

Route du Cadran, 14340 ***Tel*** *02 31 32 22 45* ***Fax*** *02 31 32 22 58* ***Rooms*** *13*

This beautiful château, set in a large tree-filled park, is a prime example of First Empire architecture. Rooms – some housed in a neighboring 18th-century house – are individually-styled. Marcel Proust is among the guests to have stayed here. The excellent restaurant serves a varied menu and specializes in local cider. **www.chateaulesbruyeres.com**

CEAUX Le Relais du Mont

P 🍴 🚸 €€

La Buvette, 50220 ***Tel*** *02 33 70 92 55* ***Fax*** *02 33 70 94 57* ***Rooms*** *28*

South of Avranches, this hotel faces west and enjoys splendid sunsets over the bay of Mont-St-Michel. A recently built hotel with decent-sized, well-maintained rooms. There are good facilities, family rooms, and an excellent restaurant. **www.relais-du-mont.fr**

CHERBOURG Hôtel Renaissance

P €

4 rue de l'Eglise, 50100 ***Tel*** *02 33 43 23 90* ***Fax*** *02 33 43 96 10* ***Rooms*** *12*

Good-value, well-maintained hotel with attractive rooms, each named after different flowers. The hotel is well located overlooking the harbor, and conveniently placed for the cross-Channel ferries and for the Cité de la Mer museum. The staff are very friendly. Limited parking is available. **www.hotel-renaissance-cherbourg.com**

CREPON La Ferme de la Rançonnière

⇅ P 🍴 ♿ €

Route d'Arromanches, 14480 ***Tel*** *02 31 22 21 73* ***Fax*** *02 31 22 98 39* ***Rooms*** *35*

An attractive fortified stone farm dating from the 13th century, featuring a typical closed courtyard with arched gateways. The rooms and the restaurant have been decorated in the same historic style. Only 1.5 miles (3 km) from the sea with golf courses all around and plenty of opportunities for sailing and bike riding. **www.ranconniere.com**

DEAUVILLE Hôtel Normandy Barrière

⇅ P 🍴 ≋ 🏋 🍸 €€€€€

38 rue J Mermoz, 14800 ***Tel*** *02 31 98 66 22* ***Fax*** *02 31 98 66 23* ***Rooms*** *290*

Deauville's landmark, this Anglo-Normandy manor house is a luxury hotel with beautiful, spacious rooms and fitness facilities. The large Belle Epoque dining room serves classic, traditional Normandy fare. Although it has been modernized, the hotel retains its 1920s charm. **www.lucienbarriere.com**

DOUAINS-PACY-SUR-EURE Château de Brécourt

P 🍴 ≋ €€

Route de Vernon, 27120 ***Tel*** *02 32 52 40 50* ***Fax*** *02 32 52 69 65* ***Rooms*** *30*

Impressive 17th-century château approached by a tree-lined drive and situated within its own grounds with a series of canals. The hotel is equally good for business or pleasure and the rooms are majestic. Gastronomic cuisine is served in the elegant restaurant. There is a tennis court and golf and horse riding are nearby. **www.chateaudebrecourt.com**

ETRETAT Domaine St Clair

P 🍴 ≋ 🏋 €€

Chemin de St Clair, 76790 ***Tel*** *02 35 27 08 23* ***Fax*** *02 35 29 92 24* ***Rooms*** *21*

Stunningly situated with panoramic views of the village and cliffs of Etretat, this 19th-century Anglo-Norman château has comfortable rooms, some with private spa baths. The rooms are individually decorated with four-poster beds and period furniture. **www.hoteletretat.com**

FECAMP Hôtel La Ferme de la Chapelle

P 🍴 ≋ ♿ €€

Route du Phare, 76400 ***Tel*** *02 35 10 12 12* ***Fax*** *02 35 10 12 13* ***Rooms*** *22*

An unusual hotel, made famous by Monet, in a wonderful, peaceful location on cliffs overlooking the sea and the busy fishing harbor. The old courtyard-style farm buildings are attached to a former priory. Cross the harbor to visit the historic town associated with William the Conqueror. The restaurant is competent. **www.fermedelachapelle.fr**

FONTENAI-SUR-ORNE Le Faisan Doré

P 🍴 🏋 €€

Rte Paris, 61200 ***Tel*** *02 33 67 18 11* ***Fax*** *02 33 35 82 15* ***Rooms*** *16*

This decent-sized hotel is located in the Suisse Normande region, close to Argentan. The quieter rooms overlook the pretty garden. There is a well-stocked bar with over 140 different wines. Meals can be eaten in the brightly decorated restaurant, or outside in summer. **www.lefaisandore.com**

GRANDCHAMP MAISY Hôtel Duguesclin

P 🍴 €

4 quai Henri Crampon, 14450 ***Tel*** *02 31 22 64 22* ***Fax*** *02 31 22 34 79* ***Rooms*** *25*

This friendly modern hotel is located on the seafront promenade. The rooms are comfortably furnished and well maintained. The excellent restaurant specializes in seafood. Parking is available. This fishing port is a good base for visiting the D-Day landing beaches at Pointe du Hoc. **www.hotel-restaurant-leduguesclin.com**

GRANVILLE Hôtel Michelet

P €

5 rue Jules Michelet, 50400 ***Tel*** *02 33 50 06 55* ***Fax*** *02 33 50 12 25* ***Rooms*** *19*

The hotel is close to the stores, restaurants, and the casino in this charming historic port. An attractive Colonial-style building, tastefully renovated, with simply furnished, well-kept rooms, some with a view. Convenient for the beach and thalasso center. Free parking. **www.hotel-michelet-granville.com**

HONFLEUR La Ferme Siméon

P 🍴 ≋ 🏋 🍸 €€€€€

Rue Adolphe Marais, 14600 ***Tel*** *02 31 81 78 00* ***Fax*** *02 31 89 48 48* ***Rooms*** *34*

Ancient farmhouse mansion that was the haunt of the Impressionist artists from the Honfleur school. Now a luxury hotel, restaurant, and spa center. Beautifully converted guest rooms; spacious and charmingly furnished. The oak-beamed restaurant serves excellent food. **www.fermesaintsimeon.fr**

L'AIGLE Hôtel du Dauphin

P 🍴 🏋 €€

Pl de la Halle, 61300 ***Tel*** *02 33 84 18 00* ***Fax*** *02 33 34 09 28* ***Rooms*** *30*

A fine stone-built inn, established in 1618. The original stables were razed during the bombardment of L'Aigle in 1944. Now the hotel, which has been in the same family for 60 years, has a restaurant, a brasserie, and a store. The rooms are functional, and there is a comfy lounge. **www.hoteldudauphin.free.fr**

LE PETIT ANDELY La Chaîne d'Or

P 🍴 🏋 €€

27 rue Grande, 27700 ***Tel*** *02 32 54 00 31* ***Fax*** *02 32 54 05 58* ***Rooms*** *11*

This 18th-century staging post was once a toll house for crossing the Seine. It is now a refined, elegant hotel. The guest rooms are well maintained, comfortable, and decorated in pastel colors. Most have a view of the Seine. Good, innovative restaurant. **www.hotel-lachainedor.com**

MACE Hôtel Île de Sées

P 🍴 🏋 €

Vandel, 61500 ***Tel*** *02 33 27 98 65* ***Fax*** *02 33 28 41 22* ***Rooms*** *16*

A rural hotel surrounded by a large park set in the heart of Normandy studfarm country. This traditional half-timbered former dairy is a friendly hotel with pleasant, cozy rooms in soft pastel tones. An ideal place to unwind and relax. Delicious food served in the comfortable restaurant. **www.ile-sees.fr**

MESNIL-VAL Hostellerie de la Vieille Ferme

P 🍴 🏋 €

23 rue de la Mer, 76910 ***Tel*** *02 35 86 72 18* ***Fax*** *02 35 86 12 67* ***Rooms*** *33*

An 18th-century farmhouse with several attractively converted outbuildings make up this Anglo-Norman hotel complex set in its own park near the beach. The guest rooms are romantically old-fashioned, with oak beams and great views. Rustic-style seafood restaurant. **www.vielle-ferme.net**

Key to Price Guide *see p550* **Key to Symbols** *see back cover flap*

MONT-ST-MICHEL Terrasses Poulard 🍴 €€

BP 18, 50170 ***Tel*** *02 33 89 02 02* ***Fax*** *02 33 60 37 31* ***Rooms*** *29*

An old stone building at the heart of Mont-St-Michel with magnificent views over the bay, as well as the abbey and the gardens. The rooms are small but clean and comfortable. The hotel is under the same ownership as the famous omelette restaurant La Mère Poulard. **www.terrasses-poulard.fr**

MORTAGNE AU PERCHE Le Tribunal 🚶 €€

4 pl Palais, 61400 ***Tel*** *02 33 25 04 77* ***Fax*** *02 33 83 60 83* ***Rooms*** *21*

Some rooms in this pretty hotel date back to the 13th century. It is a well-kept establishment with plush guest rooms and great baths. A stay here gives an experience of pleasant simplicity. The restaurant serves local dishes, on an outside terrace in summer.

MORTAIN Hôtel de la Poste P 🍴 🚶 €€

1 pl des Arcades, 50140 ***Tel*** *02 33 59 00 05* ***Fax*** *02 33 69 53 89* ***Rooms*** *27*

On the spectacular Cherbourg peninsula, this attractive 19th-century house overlooks the lovely river in Mortain. A pleasant family-run hotel with comfortable, quiet rooms and good service. Fine restaurant with an excellent wine list. Disabled facilities and a private garage. **www.hoteldelaposte.fr**

OUISTREHAM Hôtel de la Plage P €

39–41 av Pasteur, 14150 ***Tel*** *02 31 96 85 16* ***Fax*** *02 31 97 37 46* ***Rooms*** *16*

The owners have refreshed this pleasing family hotel, which lies a short walk from the expansive beach. The rooms are large and comfortable, and there's an in-house sauna. To the west you'll find wartime sites like Pegasus Bridge; to the east the beaches with family activities such as kite surfing, sand yachting, and sailing. **www.hotel-ouistreham.com**

PONT AUDEMER Belle-Île-sur-Risle P 🍴 ≋ 🚶 🍸 €€€

112 rte de Rouen, 27500 ***Tel*** *02 32 56 96 22* ***Fax*** *02 32 42 88 96* ***Rooms*** *20*

Set on an island in its own large garden of ancient trees and roses, the hotel has a fitness center, sauna, and two pools (outdoor and indoor). The recently renovated rooms are comfortable and elegant, ideal for a relaxing stay. Superb cuisine in the 19th-century rotunda. Closed mid-Nov–mid-Mar. **www.bellile.com**

PONT DE L'ARCHE Hôtel de la Tour P €

41 quai Foch, 27340 ***Tel*** *02 35 23 00 99* ***Fax*** *02 35 23 46 22* ***Rooms*** *18*

This attractive 18th-century Norman house sits at the river's edge, backing onto the village's ramparts. The interior reveals typical Normandy architecture with timber and brick walls. The good-sized rooms are individually decorated. Patio garden. Restaurants nearby. **www.hoteldelatour.org**

ROUEN Le Vieux Carré €

34 rue Ganterie, 76000 ***Tel*** *02 35 71 67 70* ***Fax*** *02 35 71 19 17* ***Rooms*** *13*

City-center hotel near the Musée des Beaux Arts and a short walk from the cathedral. This charming timbered 18th-century building hides prettily decorated, intimate guest rooms. Cozy atmosphere and attentive service. There is a shaded cobbled courtyard and tearoom. **www.vieux-carre.fr**

ROUEN Hôtel Notre-Dame P €€

4 rue de la Savonnerie, 76000 ***Tel*** *02 35 71 87 73* ***Fax*** *02 35 89 31 52* ***Rooms*** *28*

This was the home of Bishop Cauchon, Joan of Arc's accuser, until his death in 1442. This hotel located between the cathedral and the Seine has spacious rooms decorated in contemporary colors. The staff are friendly. Good buffet breakfast. Choice of restaurants nearby. **www.hotelnotredame.com**

ST-LO Hôtel Mercure ⇅ P 🍴 🚶 €€

5–7 av de Briovère, 50000 ***Tel*** *02 33 05 08 63* ***Fax*** *02 33 05 15 15* ***Rooms*** *67*

Opposite the town's ramparts, this modern hotel has comfortable and well-proportioned guest rooms; newly renovated, attractive, quiet. The restaurant "Le Tocqueville" is in a large room with lovely views of the Vire river. Regional specialties. Cozy bar. **www.mercure.com**

ST-PATERNE Château de St-Paterne P 🍴 ≋ 🚶 €€€

Le Château, 72610 ***Tel*** *02 33 27 54 71* ***Fax*** *02 33 29 16 71* ***Rooms*** *8*

Henry IV's 15th-century love-nest is set in a private park just on the outskirts of Alençon. This is not so much a hotel as a family château, where a fixed menu is served *en famille* to guests in the candlelit dining room. Magnificent rooms with stately furnishings. **www.chateau-saintpaterne.com**

ST-VAAST-LA-HOUGUE Hôtel de France et Fuchsias P 🍴 🚶 €

20 rue de Maréchal Foch, 50550 ***Tel*** *02 33 54 42 26* ***Fax*** *02 33 43 46 79* ***Rooms*** *35*

A lovely country house hotel near the fishing harbor of St-Vaast, renowned for its oysters. Country-style cozy rooms, most overlooking the exotic garden. The restaurant "Des Fuchsias" is set in a conservatory and serves delicious warm oyster dishes. Good buffet breakfast, too. Closed Jan–Feb. **www.france-fuchsias.com**

ST-VALERY-EN-CAUX Les Hêtres P 🍴 €€

24 rue des Fleurs, 76460 ***Tel*** *02 35 57 09 30* ***Fax*** *02 35 57 09 31* ***Rooms*** *4*

A typical Norman-style timbered 1627 house set in the Caux countryside between Fécamp and Dieppe. Guest rooms are luxurious, spacious, and individually decorated with modern furnishings. First-floor rooms have views of the garden. Innovative cuisine in the restaurant. **www.leshetres.com**

VERNON Hôtel d'Evreux €

11 pl d'Evreux, 27200 ***Tel*** *02 32 21 16 12* ***Fax*** *02 32 21 32 73* ***Rooms*** *12*

This typical Norman building in the center of Vernon, behind magnificent lime trees, is a former coaching inn now fully renovated with bright sunny rooms and old-fashioned furniture. The restaurant, with its giant fireplace, serves innovative traditional fare. Parking is available. **www.hoteldevreux.fr**

BRITTANY

AUDIERNE Hôtel de la Plage €

21 bd Emmanuel Brusq, 29770 ***Tel*** *02 98 70 01 07* ***Fax*** *02 98 75 04 69* ***Rooms*** *22*

Agreeable, modern, good-value, family hotel situated on the beach. The rooms are characterized by cheerful marine decor and great views of the Bay of Audierne. Billiards can be played in the bar. Excellent seafood restaurant. Well placed for a tour of the sites of Finistère. **www.hotel-finistere.com**

BENODET Domaine de Kereven €

Bénodet, 29950 ***Tel*** *02 98 57 02 46* ***Fax*** *02 98 66 22 61* ***Rooms*** *12*

A number of buildings attractively built in traditional style on the site of an 18th-century cider farm. Pleasantly furnished, characterful rooms overlook the expansive grounds. Just 1 mile (1.5 km) from the popular beaches at Bénodet and not far from the cathedral city of Quimper. **www.kereven.com**

BREST Hôtel de la Corniche €€

1 rue Amiral-Nicol, 29200 ***Tel*** *02 98 45 12 42* ***Fax*** *02 98 49 01 53* ***Rooms*** *16*

This modern hotel, built of local stone in the Breton style, is on the west side of the city near the naval base. It is conveniently located for walks along the scenic coastline. The rooms are simply furnished. The hotel restaurant offers a set evening menu four nights per week; reservations required. **www.hotel-la-corniche.com**

CARNAC Hôtel Tumulus €€

Route du Tumulus, 56340 ***Tel*** *02 97 52 08 21* ***Fax*** *02 97 52 81 88* ***Rooms*** *23*

This hotel is located near the prehistoric sights that make Carnac world famous. Refurbished, elegant rooms mix a Gustavian style with a touch of the Orient. There are fine views across the grounds onto Quiberon Bay. The pool, lush gardens, wellness center, and restaurant add to this hotel's appeal. **www.hotel-tumulus.com**

CHATEAUBOURG Moulin Ar Milin €

30 rue due Paris, 35221 ***Tel*** *02 99 00 30 91* ***Fax*** *02 99 00 37 56* ***Rooms*** *32*

Attractive water mill converted into a *hotel de charme*. The establishment is in two parts: the Hôtel de Moulin in the original mill and the more recent Hôtel du Parc. There are 100 different types of tree planted in the park, which has a river running through and a tennis court. The first-class restaurant has a noted wine list. **www.armilin.com**

DINAN Moulin de la Fontaine des Eaux €

Vallée de la Fontaine des Eaux, 22100 ***Tel*** *02 96 87 92 09* ***Fax*** *02 96 87 92 09* ***Rooms*** *5*

Set in a wooded valley 5 minutes from the port of Dinan, this converted 18th-century watermill overlooks its own lake and grounds. This is a *chambre d'hôte* only; there is no restaurant, but breakfast is provided. Simply furnished rooms, with disabled access. Private parking. **www.dinanbandb.com**

DINARD Hôtel de la Vallée €€

6 av Georges V, 35801 ***Tel*** *02 99 46 94 00* ***Fax*** *02 99 88 22 47* ***Rooms*** *24*

A completely refurbished and modernized hotel centrally located on the harborfront but away from the hustle and bustle of the resort. Choose one of the front rooms, as they have lovely views. The restaurant is the rising star of Dinard cuisine; excellent seafood as well as a choice of beef or duck. **www.hoteldelavallee.com**

DOL DE BRETAGNE Domaine des Ormes €€

35120 ***Tel*** *02 99 73 53 00* ***Fax*** *02 99 73 53 55* ***Rooms*** *45*

This is part of a privately owned vacation resort with an 18-hole golf course, aquaparc, horse-riding school, and adventure park. The guest rooms are charming – there are even 18 cozy tree houses with rooms, accessible by rope ladder! The restaurant serves classic French food. **www.lesormes.com**

FOUESNANT Hôtel l'Orée du Bois €

4 rue Kergoadig, 29170 ***Tel*** *02 98 56 00 06* ***Fax*** *02 98 56 14 17* ***Rooms*** *15*

Simple, well-furnished rooms with en suite showers are excellent value; the rooms with just a sink are a bargain. A cheerful breakfast room is decked out in bright marine decor and there's a terrace for breakfast on fine days. The hotel is just a few minutes from the beach at Cape Coz and the coast paths. **www.hotel-oreedubois.com**

ILE DE GROIX Hôtel de la Marine €

7 rue du Général de Gaulle, 56590 ***Tel*** *02 97 86 80 05* ***Fax*** *02 97 86 56 37* ***Rooms*** *22*

Expect a warm welcome at this hotel in the middle of the beautiful island of Groix. This relaxing hideaway has charming guest rooms that overlook either the sea or the garden terrace. At the restaurant, great care is taken in the preparation of fine fish dishes. **www.hoteldelamarine.com**

LOCQUIREC Le Grand Hôtel des Bains €€€€

15 rue de L'Eglise, 29241 ***Tel*** *02 98 67 41 02* ***Fax*** *02 98 67 44 60* ***Rooms*** *36*

Convenient for visiting the Armorique Regional Park, this Belle Epoque spa hotel has gardens that lead to a sandy beach. Rooms have stylish contemporary furnishings, most with balconies. Beauty and health treatments are available. Restaurant open evenings only. The chef uses fresh, local produce. **www.grand-hotel-des-bains.com**

MORLAIX Hôtel de l'Europe €€

1 rue d'Aiguillon, 29600 ***Tel*** *02 98 62 11 99* ***Fax*** *02 98 88 83 38* ***Rooms*** *60*

This Second Empire hotel, located in the city center, has an elegant and richly decorated interior. The guest rooms are well equipped and soundproofed. Each room is different, from traditional to modern. Service is attentive. Buffet breakfast. The brasserie is good value. **www.hotel-europe-com.fr**

PAIMPOL Repaire de Kerroc'h €€

29 quai Morand, 22500 ***Tel*** *02 96 20 50 13* ***Fax*** *02 96 22 07 46* ***Rooms*** *13*

This former 18th-century home of a wealthy pirate, near the port, has pleasant rooms, some with views. The guest rooms are cozy, many with parquet flooring. Drinks can be enjoyed around a roaring fire in winter, or on the pretty terrace in summer. Fish specialties in the restaurant. **www.repaire-kerroch.com**

PENESTIN SUR MER Hôtel Loscolo €€

La Pointe de Loscolo, 56760 ***Tel*** *02 99 90 31 90* ***Fax*** *02 99 90 32 14* ***Rooms*** *13*

A traditional building with slate roof, on a cape with magnificent sea views to both sides, and good walking nearby. The rooms are comfortable; some have a private terrace. The breakfast is copious; half-board rates (which include two meals) are good value. The restaurant serves rich cuisine. Closed Jan–Apr. **www.hotelloscolo.com**

PLEVEN Manoir du Vaumadeuc €€€€

Le Vaumadeuc, 22130 ***Tel*** *02 96 84 46 17* ***Fax*** *02 96 84 40 16* ***Rooms*** *13*

This grand old manor house nestles in the Fôret de la Hunaudaye. The building dates from the 15th century, and inside, the magnificent granite staircase leads you to the first-floor guest rooms. The wooded park around it has a beautiful rose garden and lake. Heliport and parking. **www.vaumadeuc.com**

PLOUGONVELIN Hostellerie de la Pointe de St-Mathieu €€€

Pointe de St-Mathieu, 29217 ***Tel*** *02 98 89 00 19* ***Fax*** *02 98 89 15 68* ***Rooms*** *25*

Situated near a lighthouse and ancient abbey ruins, this hotel was once a traditional farm but has grown into a modern hotel. The farmhouse now houses a restaurant serving sophisticated seafood dishes. The hotel makes a great base from which to explore the dramatic Atlantic coastline. **www.pointe-saint-mathieu.com**

QUIBERON Hôtel Bellevue €€

Rue de Tiviec, 56173 ***Tel*** *02 97 50 16 28* ***Fax*** *02 97 30 44 34* ***Rooms*** *38*

Located near the seafront, casino, and thalassotherapy center, this modern hotel forms an L-shape around the heated swimming pool. The guest rooms are comfortable; the restaurant is airy and bright. Poolside buffet breakfast or Continental breakfast in your room. Demi-*pension* (half board) only. Private parking. **www.bellevuequiberon.com**

QUIMPER Hôtel Gradlon €€

30 rue de Brest, 29000 ***Tel*** *02 98 95 04 39* ***Fax*** *02 98 95 61 25* ***Rooms*** *22*

Just two minutes' walk from the historic city center, this hotel has charming, peaceful rooms – a few overlooking the enclosed flower garden and fountain. Some disabled access. Continental breakfast is served on the pretty veranda. Cozy salon bar with open fire. **www.hotel-gradlon.com**

RENNES Le Coq-Gadby €€€€

156 rue d'Antrain, 35700 ***Tel*** *02 99 38 05 55* ***Fax*** *02 99 38 53 40* ***Rooms*** *11*

An elegant 17th-century building just 5 minutes' drive from the city center. Calm and intimate with classic period furnishings, polished parquet floors, and ornate mirrors. The guest rooms "Olympe," "Louis XV," "Louis XVI," and "Anglaise" are vast and elegant. Spa and sauna next door to hotel. **www.lecoq-gadby.fr**

ROSCOFF Hôtel Bellevue €

Bd Ste Barbe, 29681 ***Tel*** *02 98 61 23 38* ***Fax*** *02 98 61 11 80* ***Rooms*** *18*

This old Breton house, just a few minutes from the ferry terminal, enjoys fine views of the sea and old port. The guest rooms are a little cramped, but bright and quiet. At the back of the building is a pleasant patio garden where Continental breakfast is served on warm days. **www.hotel-bellevue-roscoff.fr**

ST MALO Hôtel Elizabeth €€€

2 rue des Cordiers, 35400 ***Tel*** *02 99 56 24 98* ***Fax*** *02 99 56 39 24* ***Rooms*** *17*

This hotel is located within the ramparts of the old town, just 2 minutes' drive from the ferry terminal. The building has a 16th-century stone façade. The interior is classic in style, if a little somber. Rooms are comfortable and well equipped. Friendly owners, and private garage. **www.hotel-elizabeth.fr**

ST THEGONNEC Ars Presbital Koz €

18 rue de Gividic, 29410 ***Tel*** *02 98 79 45 62* ***Fax*** *02 98 79 48 47* ***Rooms*** *6*

Rustic, comfortable bed and breakfast. This 18th-century building, once a presbytery, has six spacious guest rooms. No television. Breakfast can be enjoyed outside on the terrace. Mme Prigent, the owner, will prepare a three-course dinner if you reserve before noon. Large garden with parking.

VANNES Villa Kerasy P ▤ ♿ €€€

20 av Favrel et Lincy, 56000 ***Tel*** *02 97 68 36 83* ***Fax*** *02 97 68 36 84* ***Rooms*** *15*

A slightly exotic hotel with plenty of charm, the Asian-inspired Villa Kerasy takes the French East India Company and the spice route as its theme. Each room represents a different port. The spa specializes in Ayurvedic treatments, which promise revitalization, an end to stress, and a spiritual awakening. **www.villakerasy.com**

THE LOIRE

AMBOISE Le Choiseul P 🍴 ≋ 🚸 ▤ €€€

36 quai Charles-Guinot, 37400 ***Tel*** *02 47 30 45 45* ***Fax*** *02 47 30 46 10* ***Rooms*** *32*

An ivy-covered 18th-century manor house set in elegant grounds, with views of the Loire. The comfortably sized guest rooms are tastefully decorated. The airy restaurant serves sophisticated cuisine. There are pretty flower-filled walks, and tennis courts. **www.le-choiseul.com**

ANGERS Hôtel Mail P €

8 rue des Ursules, 49100 ***Tel*** *02 41 25 05 25* ***Fax*** *02 41 86 91 20* ***Rooms*** *26*

A charming hotel in a quiet corner of the city center, this 17th-century building was once part of a convent. The bedrooms are tastefully decorated. A particularly good breakfast is served in the dining room. There is also a shaded courtyard with tables. Friendly owners. **www.hotel-du-mail.com**

ANGERS Hôtel Anjou ⇅ P 🍴 🚸 ▤ €€

1 bd de Maréchal Foch, 49100 ***Tel*** *02 41 21 12 11* ***Fax*** *02 41 87 22 21* ***Rooms*** *53*

The interior of this city-center hotel has eclectic decoration, with Art Deco mosaics, 17th- and 18th-century fixtures, ornate ceilings, and stained-glass windows. The rooms are spacious and elegantly furnished. "Le Salamandre" restaurant is recommended. Parking available. **www.hoteldanjou.fr**

AZAY LE RIDEAU Le Grand Monarque P 🍴 €€

3 pl de la République, 37190 ***Tel*** *02 47 45 40 08* ***Fax*** *02 47 45 46 25* ***Rooms*** *24*

In a peaceful setting, this hotel comprises two buildings, one an ancient staging post, the other a *hôtel particulier*, separated by a tree-lined courtyard. The rooms are traditionally furnished and the bathrooms functional. There's a rustic dining room and an attractive terrace overlooking the park. Good restaurant. **www.legrandmonarque.com**

AZAY LE RIDEAU Manoir de la Rémonière ▨ P ≋ 🚸 Ψ €€

La Chapelle Ste Blaise, 37190 ***Tel*** *02 47 45 24 88* ***Fax*** *06 84 84 23 22* ***Rooms*** *6*

A 15th-century château built on the sight of a Roman villa by the River Indre not far from the Château d'Azay-le-Rideau. The stately bedrooms have an old-world feel and views onto the grounds and the Gallo-Roman ruins. There is a large pool and ample sporting possibilities, including archery and fishing. **www.manoirdelaremoniere.com**

BEAUGENCY Hôtel de la Sologne P 🚸 €

6 pl St Firmin, 45190 ***Tel*** *02 38 44 50 27* ***Fax*** *02 38 44 90 19* ***Rooms*** *16*

This typical Sologne stone building on the main square overlooks the ruined castle keep of St Firmin. The bedrooms are small, but cozy, bright, and simply furnished. There is a pretty flower-decked patio where breakfast can be eaten. Private parking available. **www.hoteldelasologne.com**

BOURGES Le Bourbon ⇅ P 🍴 🚸 ▤ €€€

Bd République, 18000 ***Tel*** *02 48 70 70 00* ***Fax*** *02 48 70 21 22* ***Rooms*** *62*

An ancient 17th-century abbey building in the center of Bourges now houses this comfortable hotel. The bright, spacious rooms are furnished in a modern, elegant style. Impressive salon bar and gastronomic restaurant in the former chapel St Ambroix. Parking available. **www.alpha-hotellerie.com**

CHAMPIGNE Château des Briottières P 🍴 ≋ 🚸 €€€€

Rte Marigné, 49330 ***Tel*** *02 41 42 00 02* ***Fax*** *02 41 42 01 55* ***Rooms*** *14*

Family-run 18th-century château set in the 125-acre park à l'Anglaise. The rooms have luxurious furnishings with canopied beds and rich fabrics. There is also a charming cottage with double rooms for families. Romantic dinners as well as cooking classes for groups are on offer; reservations required. **www.briottieres.com**

CHARTRES Le Grand Monarque ⇅ P 🍴 ▤ €€

22 place des Epars, 28005 ***Tel*** *02 37 18 15 15* ***Fax*** *02 37 36 34 18* ***Rooms*** *55*

This converted 16th-century staging post, with massively thick stone walls, has been managed by the same family since the 1960s; part of the Best Western network. The rooms are simple. There is a pleasant bistro, and a gastronomic restaurant, "Le Georges." **www.bw-grand-monarque.com**

CHÊNEHUTTE-LES-TUFFEAUX Le Prieuré P 🍴 ≋ 🚸 €€€

Le Prieuré, 49350 ***Tel*** *02 41 67 90 14* ***Fax*** *02 41 67 92 24* ***Rooms*** *36*

This former priory, dating from the 12th century, has magnificent views over the Loire. The bedrooms in the priory have a romantic, refined decor, two with fireplaces. More modern bedrooms are found in the bungalows scattered in the park.The elegant restaurant serves gourmet cuisine with the best regional produce. **www.prieure.com**

CHENONCEAUX Hostel du Roy

P 🍴 🚸 €

9 rue du Dr Bretonneau, 37150 ***Tel*** *02 47 23 90 17* ***Fax*** *02 47 23 89 81* ***Rooms*** *32*

A sprawling hotel-restaurant, with a 16th-century fireplace and a dining room hung with hunting trophies. The well-equipped rooms are simple and appealing, and the atmosphere relaxing. There is a garden and pretty terrace. The restaurant serves classic dishes, including game in season. **www.hostelduroy.com**

CHENONCEAUX Hôtel du Bon Laboureur

P 🍴 ≋ 🚸 ☰ €€

6 rue de Dr Bretonneau, 37150 ***Tel*** *02 47 23 90 02* ***Fax*** *02 47 23 82 01* ***Rooms*** *25*

Near the famous château, this inn is set in its own park. The bedrooms are located in the collection of 18th-century stone dwellings. They are small but well equipped and have designer bathrooms. Some are suitable for disabled guests. The oak-beamed restaurant is good. **www.bonlaboureur.com**

CHINON Hostellerie Gargantua

P 🍴 €

73 rue Voltaire, 37500 ***Tel*** *02 47 93 04 71* ***Fax*** *02 47 93 08 02* ***Rooms*** *8*

This hotel, in the ancient Palais du Boulliage with its pointed roof and turret, is a local landmark. The guest rooms are comfortable, if cramped. Each has a theme, from Jeanne d'Arc and Richelieu to the Empire period. Pleasant dining room and terrace. Modern and classic cuisine. **www.hotel-gargantua.com**

CHINON Hôtel Diderot

P €

4 rue Buffon, 37500 ***Tel*** *02 47 93 18 87* ***Fax*** *02 47 93 37 10* ***Rooms*** *26*

The palm and olive trees that grow around the 18th-century building testify to the mild climate. This elegant creeper-clad hotel is found on a quiet street near Chinon city center. The rooms are calm, simple, and well-maintained. Breakfast served in a rustic dining room. Free municipal parking nearby. **www.hoteldiderot.com**

CHINON Château de Marçay

⇅ P 🍴 ≋ 🚸 🍸 ☰ €€€

Le Château, 37500 ***Tel*** *02 47 93 03 47* ***Fax*** *02 47 93 45 33* ***Rooms*** *39*

Elegant hotel in this restored 15th-century fortified château. Enjoy the lovely views over the surrounding parkland and vineyards from the well-appointed bedrooms. Refined and aristocratic atmosphere, impeccable service and cuisine. Closed mid-Nov–mid-Mar. **www.chateaudemarcay.com**

COUR-CHEVERNY Hôtels des Trois Marchands

P 🍴 €

Pl de l'Eglise, 41700 ***Tel*** *02 54 79 96 44* ***Fax*** *02 54 79 25 60* ***Rooms*** *24*

Just 0.6 of a mile (1 km) from the château, this ancient coaching inn with a garden has been in the same family since 1865. The bedrooms are comfortably furnished in a rustic style. Have breakfast in one of the three Louis XIII dining rooms. Excellent restaurant. Parking available. **www.hoteldes3marchands.com**

FONTEVRAUD-L'ABBAYE Le Prieuré St-Lazare

⇅ P 🍴 🚸 €€

38 rte St Jean de l'Habit, 49590 ***Tel*** *02 41 51 73 16* ***Fax*** *02 41 51 75 50* ***Rooms*** *52*

The surroundings of this hotel, housed in the former St Lazare priory within the famous royal abbey complex, are stunning. The rooms are elegantly decorated in a modern, contemporary style. The restaurant, in the ancient cloister, is a gourmet's delight. Closed mid-Nov–Mar. **www.hotelfp-fontevraud.com**

GENNES Aux Naulets d'Anjou

P 🍴 ≋ 🚸 €

18 rue Croix de la Mission, 49350 ***Tel*** *02 41 51 81 88* ***Fax*** *02 41 38 00 78* ***Rooms*** *19*

At the edge of the village in private grounds, this hotel is quiet and comfortable. The warm welcome compensates for the lack of architectural interest. The rooms are simple and bright. The restaurant serves traditional cuisine with no frills. Reading room and lounge. **www.hotel-lesnauletsdanjou.com**

GIEN La Poularde

🍴 €

13 quai de Nice, 45500 ***Tel*** *02 38 67 36 05* ***Fax*** *02 38 38 18 78* ***Rooms*** *9*

On the banks of the river Loire, just steps away from the Musée de la Faïencerie, this hotel is functional and somewhat lacking in charm. The 19th-century bourgeois house has pleasant rooms simply furnished with Louis-Philippe furniture. The restaurant serves excellent food. **www.lapoularde.fr**

LA CHARTRE SUR LE LOIR Hôtel de France

P 🍴 ≋ 🚸 €

20 pl de la République, 72340 ***Tel*** *02 43 44 40 16* ***Fax*** *02 43 79 62 20* ***Rooms*** *24*

This ivy-clad hotel in the city center has a delightful garden bordering the river. Good value standard-sized bedrooms. Simply furnished, but comfortable. The bar and the brasserie are basic, but the dining room is pleasant. Generous portions of good food. Pretty garden terrace. Closed Jan–mid-Mar. **hoteldefrance@worldonline.fr**

LE CROISIC Fort de l'Océan

P 🍴 ≋ 🚸 ☰ €€€€

Pointe du Croisic, 44490 ***Tel*** *02 40 15 77 77* ***Fax*** *02 40 15 77 80* ***Rooms*** *9*

A Vauban construction, 17th-century ramparts enclose this former fortress facing the sea. Nothing remains of the harsh military lifestyle. Comfort is key, and the guest rooms are stylish and comfortable, some equipped for disabled visitors. The restaurant serves wonderful seafood. **www.hotelfortocean.com**

LE MANS Auberge de la Foresterie

⇅ P 🍴 ≋ 🚸 ☰ ♿ €

Route de Laval, 72000 ***Tel*** *02 43 51 25 12* ***Fax*** *02 43 28 54 58* ***Rooms*** *41*

Elegant and welcoming hotel with pleasant gardens and a pool-side terrace for meals when the weather is fine. Easy access by tram to the historic center of Le Mans and the cathedral. One child under 13 stays free, in the same room. **www.aubergedelaforesterie.com**

LOCHES Hôtel de France P 🍴 ▤ €

6 rue Picois, 37600 ***Tel*** *02 47 59 00 32* ***Fax*** *02 47 59 28 66* ***Rooms*** *19*

In an elegant former staging post built of local tuffeau stone with a traditional slate roof, this hotel is situated near the historic medieval gate. The rooms are simply furnished, comfortable and well maintained. Restaurant serves good regional dishes such as home-smoked salmon. **http://h.france.loches.free.fr**

LUYNES Domaine de Beauvois ⇅ P 🍴 ≋ 🏃 ▤ €€€

Rte de Cléré-les-Pins, 37230 ***Tel*** *02 47 55 50 11* ***Fax*** *02 47 55 59 62* ***Rooms*** *36*

This Renaissance manor house built around a 15th-century tower overlooks its own lake. The park is so vast that the pathways are signposted. Rooms are large and comfortable, with luxurious marble bathrooms. Enjoy a candlelit dinner in the acclaimed restaurant. **www.beauvois.com**

MONTBAZON Château d'Artigny ⇅ P 🍴 ≋ 🏃 🍸 ▤ €€€€

Rte de Monts, 37250 ***Tel*** *02 47 34 30 30* ***Fax*** *02 47 34 30 39* ***Rooms*** *63*

This 20th-century château has grounds overlooking the River Indre. The grandiose classical exterior is matched by a formal Empire-style interior. The Baroque-style guest rooms are sumptuous. The splendid rotunda restaurant serves gourmet regional specialties. Superb wine list. **www.artigny.com**

MONTLOUIS SUR LOIRE Château de la Bourdaisière ⇅ P ≋ 🏃 🍸 €€€

25 rue de la Bourdaisière, 37270 ***Tel*** *02 47 45 16 31* ***Fax*** *02 47 45 09 11* ***Rooms*** *20*

A magnificent château refurbished as luxury accommodations. Gabrielle d'Estrées, mistress of Henri IV, was born here in 1565. Some of the elegant, luxurious guest rooms have period furniture. The pavilion in the grounds houses six bedrooms. The gardens are open to the public. **www.chateaulabourdaisiere.com**

MONTREUIL-BELLAY Relais du Bellay ⇅ P 🍴 ≋ 🏃 🍸 €

96 rue Nationale, 49260 ***Tel*** *02 41 53 10 10* ***Fax*** *02 41 38 70 61* ***Rooms*** *42*

The 17th-century main building and stylishly furnished annex house the guest rooms. All are calm and quiet, some with disabled access. Heated pool, sauna, Turkish bath, Jacuzzi, and gym available. The Splendid hotel, which shares the hotel grounds, has a restaurant. **www.splendid-hotel.fr**

MUIDES SUR LOIRE Château de Colliers P ≋ 🏃 €€€

41500 ***Tel*** *02 54 87 50 75* ***Fax*** *02 54 87 03 64* ***Rooms*** *6*

This château, a short drive east of Blois in the woods, is both rustic and grand. In the 18th century it belonged to a governor of Louisiana. There is a delightfully romantic room, at the top of the building, with Empire period furniture and a roof terrace. Dinner is by reservation only. **www.chateau-colliers.com**

NANTES Amiral ⇅ €

26 bis rue Scribe, 44000 ***Tel*** *02 40 69 20 21* ***Fax*** *02 40 73 98 13* ***Rooms*** *49*

Movie theaters, theaters, restaurants, and Passage Pommeraye are on the doorstep of this city center hotel. The soundproofing in the bedrooms is good. The façade is modern and bright, and the guest rooms are fully equipped and comfortable. Continental breakfast. **www.hotel-nantes.fr**

NANTES Jules Verne ⇅ P ▤ €

3 rue de Couëdic, 44000 ***Tel*** *02 40 35 74 50* ***Fax*** *02 40 20 09 35* ***Rooms*** *65*

Part of the Best Western group, this modern hotel is functional rather than attractive. It stands in a busy pedestrian square in the city center, well placed for visiting the sights. Reasonably sized comfortable rooms with satellite TV, some with disabled access. Good buffet breakfast. Parking for a fee. **hoteljulesverne@wanadoo.fr**

NANTES Hôtel La Pérouse ⇅ P 🍸 ▤ €€

3 allée Duquesne, 44000 ***Tel*** *02 40 89 75 00* ***Fax*** *02 40 89 76 00* ***Rooms*** *46*

Named after a French navigator, this chic hotel with its zen atmosphere opened in 1993. The rooms have glossy wooden flooring and crisp contempory furniture. Reasonably quiet. The breakfast buffet is good. Free access to nearby gym for guests. **www.hotel-laperouse.fr**

NEURY EN CHAMPAGNE Château de la Renaudière P €

72240 ***Tel*** *02 43 20 71 09* ***Fax*** *02 43 20 75 56* ***Rooms*** *3*

A gracious château owned by the Marquis de Mascureau, set among rolling meadows between Le Mans and Laval. All the guest rooms have private bathrooms, and are tastefully furnished with period furniture. The charming owners enjoy introducing visitors to the region. Closed Nov–Apr. **www.bienvenueauchateau.com**

NOIRMOUTIER EN L'ILE Hotel Fleur de Sel P 🍴 ≋ 🏃 🍸 €€

Rue des Saulniers, 85330 ***Tel*** *02 51 39 09 07* ***Fax*** *02 51 39 09 76* ***Rooms*** *35*

This hotel stands in the heart of a vast landscaped Mediterranean-style garden with a swimming pool. Some guest rooms are decorated with English-style pine and face the pool; others have a marine theme and private terrace. The chef serves the best cuisine in the Vendée. Closed Nov–mid-Mar. **www.fleurdesel.fr**

ONZAIN Domaine des Hauts de Loire P 🍴 ≋ 🏃 🍸 ▤ €€€€

Rte d'Herbault, 41150 ***Tel*** *02 54 20 72 57* ***Fax*** *02 54 20 77 32* ***Rooms*** *32*

This former hunting lodge with large grounds retains its grandeur, with richly furnished, bright, comfortable guest rooms. This is an unashamedly expensive place to relax. The chef prepares cutting-edge and classic food, served with superb local wines. There is a tennis court. Closed Dec–Feb. **www.domainehautsloire.com**

ORLEANS Hôtel de l'Abeille €

64 rue Alsace Lorraine, 45000 ***Tel*** *02 38 53 54 87* ***Fax*** *02 38 62 65 84* ***Rooms*** *31*

Named in honor of Napoleon and his emblem the bee, this hotel has been run by the same famiily since 1920. It is something of a shrine to Joan of Arc. The grand Neoclassical building houses well decorated, old-style rooms and a good library. There is a terrace looking onto the cathedral. Bicycle rental is available. **www.hoteldelabeille.com**

RESTIGNE Manoir de Restigné P 🍴 ≋ €€€€

15 rte de Tours, 37140 ***Tel*** *02 47 97 00 06* ***Fax*** *02 47 97 01 43* ***Rooms*** *7*

Sitting among vineyards near Bourgueil is this tastefully restored 17th-century manor house, offering spacious, elegantly furnished bedrooms named after grape varieties. Meals are served in the former wine cellar and there is a lovely 18th-century orangerie in the grounds. Closed Jan–Feb. **www.manoirderestigne.com**

ROCHECORBON Domaine des Hautes Roches ⇅ P 🍴 ≋ 🚸 €€€

86 quai de la Loire, 37210 ***Tel*** *02 47 52 88 88* ***Fax*** *02 47 52 81 30* ***Rooms*** *15*

Surrounded by Vouvray vineyards, near Tours, this was once a monks' residence. Fully restored, it has all modern comforts. The underground rooms, hewn into the tuffeau chalk in this "troglodyte" hotel, are spacious and characterful. Dine in the château, or on the terrace. Closed Feb–Mar. **www.leshautesroches.com**

ROMORANTIN-LANTHENAY Grand Hôtel du Lion d'Or ⇅ P 🍴 ☰ €€€

69 rue Georges Clémenceau, 41200 ***Tel*** *02 54 94 15 15* ***Fax*** *02 54 88 24 87* ***Rooms*** *16*

This former Renaissance mansion house is now a gastronomic halt in a historic town. From the outside the building is unimpressive, but the interior has instant charm. The luxury bedrooms lead off from a cobbled courtyard. The decor is authentic Napoléon III. Formal gardens. **www.hotel-liondor.fr**

SALBRIS Domaine de Valaudran P 🍴 ≋ ♿ €€

Route de Romorantin, 41300 ***Tel*** *02 54 97 20 00* ***Fax*** *02 54 97 12 22* ***Rooms*** *36*

This big family house set in five acres of gardens in the heart of the Sologne has been transformed into a pleasant country-house hotel. The stylish, contemporary rooms contrast with the stately home exterior. A billiard table is available. The good, traditional restaurant uses home-grown vegetables. **www.hotelvalaudran.com**

SAUMUR La Croix de la Voulte P ≋ €

Rte de Boumois, 49400 ***Tel*** *02 41 38 46 66* ***Fax*** *02 41 38 46 66* ***Rooms*** *4*

This manor house, outside Saumur, dates from the 15th century. Built at a crossroads or *croix*, it was the turning point for the royal huntsmen. The bedrooms are all different, two with original Louis XIV fireplaces, and classic furnishings. Breakfast served at poolside in fine weather. **www.lacroixdelavoulte.com**

SAUMUR Hôtel Anne d'Anjou ⇅ P 🚸 €€

32-34 quai Mayaud, 49400 ***Tel*** *02 41 67 30 30* ***Fax*** *02 41 67 51 00* ***Rooms*** *44*

The decor in this elegant mansion, sitting between the river Loire and the château, is sophisticated and romantic. This fine building with its impressive façade, grand staircase, and painted ceiling has guest rooms decorated in Empire or contemporary style. Breakfast in the courtyard. **www.hotel-anneanjou.com**

SILLE-LE-GUILLAUME Relais des Etangs de Guibert P 🍴 €

Neufchâtel-en-Saosnois, 72600 ***Tel*** *02 43 97 15 38* ***Fax*** *02 43 33 22 99* ***Rooms*** *15*

North of Le Mans, this beautiful stone-built country house is situated at the edge of the forest in a charming and romantic setting, with a turret overlooking the flower-filled grounds and lake. Individually decorated rooms in warm tones, some with original beamed ceilings. Friendly. **www.lesetangsdeguibert.com**

SOUVIGNY-EN-SOLOGNE Ferme des Foucault P €€

Ménestreau-en-Villette, 45240 ***Tel*** *02 38 76 94 41* ***Fax*** *02 38 76 94 41* ***Rooms*** *3*

Deep in the forest in the Sologne countryside is this attractive redbrick and timber farmhouse. The immense bedrooms are cozy, with superb bathrooms. One even has a fireplace. The other rooms are decorated with paintings by the owner's daughter. Friendly, relaxed atmosphere. **www.ferme-des-foucault.com**

ST LAURENT NOUAN Hôtel Le Verger P 🚸 €

14 rue du Port-Pichard, 41220 ***Tel*** *02 54 87 22 22* ***Fax*** *02 54 87 22 82* ***Rooms*** *14*

Ideally placed for visiting the famous Loire châteaux, and only 5 miles (8 km) from Chambord, this 19th-century bourgeois house has an interior courtyard and fountain. The rooms are well maintained, spacious, and calm. The wooded park ensures a peaceful stay. **www.hotel-le-verger.com**

ST NAZAIRE Au Bon Acceuil 🍴 🚸 €€

39 rue Marceau, 44600 ***Tel*** *02 40 22 07 05* ***Fax*** *02 40 19 01 58* ***Rooms*** *17*

This enchanting hotel in a peaceful corner of the city center had the fortune to escape the destruction of World War II. The guest rooms are simple, modern, and functional. The dining room is a little gloomy, but serves good seafood. Friendly and welcoming atmosphere. Closed last two weeks Jul. **www.au-bon-accueil44.com**

ST PATRICE Château de Rochecotte ⇅ P 🍴 ≋ 🚸 €€€

St Patrice, Langeais, 37130 ***Tel*** *02 47 96 16 16* ***Fax*** *02 47 96 90 59* ***Rooms*** *35*

Situated a short way from Langeais, Prince Talleyrand's château was completely renovated and opened as an elegant hotel in 1986. It is set in a charming, tranquil 19-acre park and woodland. The guest rooms are large, each with a view. The interior is decorated sumptuously. Closed mid-Jan–mid-Feb. **www.chateaurochecotte.fr**

TOURS Hôtel L'Adresse €

12 rue de la Rôtisserie, 37000 ***Tel*** *02 47 20 85 76* ***Fax*** *02 47 05 74 87* ***Rooms*** *17*

A completely refurbished hotel concealed behind a discreet but elegant façade of an 18th-century townhouse. The rooms offer an appealing blend of minimalist modern and 250-year-old architecture. Located right in the city center, it is ideal for restaurants, the conference center, and the train station. **www.hotel-ladresse.com**

VITRY-AUX-LOGES Château de Plessis-Beauregard P €€

Le Plessis, 45530 ***Tel*** *02 38 59 47 24* ***Fax*** *02 38 59 47 48* ***Rooms*** *3*

Located beside the Fôret d'Orléans, this turreted, brick château has light, airy rooms. The guest rooms, authentically furnished in the Empire style, overlook the flower-filled gardens. Chat with your hosts at breakfast, or in the evening around the fireplace. Bikes available. **www.chateaux-france.com/plessisbeauregard/**

VOUVRAY Château de Jallanges P €€€

9 Jallange, Vernou sur Brenne, 37210 ***Tel*** *02 47 52 06 66* ***Fax*** *02 47 52 11 18* ***Rooms*** *7*

An imposing Renaissance brick château, and now a family home, the comfortable guest rooms are furnished with style. Guests are taken on a guided tour from the private chapel to the top of the turrets from where there is a superb view. A good base for exploring Touraine. **www.jallanges.com**

BURGUNDY & FRANCHE-COMTE

ALOXE-CORTON Hôtel Villa Louise P €€

9 rue Franche, 21420 ***Tel*** *03 80 26 46 70* ***Fax*** *03 80 26 47 16* ***Rooms*** *11*

The finest Corton-Charlemagne vines provide a magnificent backdrop to this 17th-century wine-makers' domaine. Cozy, bedrooms have well-equipped bathrooms. The rustic interior includes a homely living room with open fireplace. Wine-tasting evenings are held for guests. There are also Turkish baths, solarium, and heated pool. **www.hotel-villa-louise.fr**

ARC-ET-SENANS La Saline Royale P €€

Arc-et-Senans, 25610 ***Tel*** *03 81 54 45 00* ***Rooms*** *31*

To stay in this World Heritage site and architectural museum is a unique experience combining comfortable, high-class dormitory accommodation, with Louis XVI magnificence. The breathtaking salt works, an 18th-century masterpiece by Nicolas Ledoux, accepts guests but you must reserve well in advance. **www.salineroyale.com**

AUXERRE Le Parc des Maréchaux P €€

6 av Foch, 89000 ***Tel*** *03 86 51 43 77* ***Fax*** *03 86 51 31 72* ***Rooms*** *25*

Close to the town center is this elegant, renovated Napoleon III building. The pretty bedrooms, each named after a famous French *maréchal*, are decorated in soft golden tones and furnished in the Empire style. The quietest rooms overlook the lovely park planted with century-old trees. Cozy bar for guests. **www.hotel-parcmarechaux.com**

BEAUNE Le Home P €€

138 rte Dijon, 21200 ***Tel*** *03 80 22 16 43* ***Fax*** *03 80 24 90 74* ***Rooms*** *20*

Just outside town, set back from the main road, is this homely hotel in a charming garden. A former Burgundy farmhouse that Mme. Jacquet and her daughter Mathilde have decorated in English style. Cozy, relaxing living rooms and comfortable bedrooms. Excellent wine cellar. **www.lehome.fr**

BEAUNE Hôtel Le Cep P €€€

27 rue Maufoux, 21200 ***Tel*** *03 80 22 35 48* ***Fax*** *03 80 22 76 80* ***Rooms*** *62*

In the heart of the Old Town is this elegant hotel, renovated in a Renaissance style. Legend has it that Louis XIV preferred to stay here rather than at the hospice. The rooms, some with Baroque decor, are ornately furnished with antiques. Each is named after local wine. **www.hotel-cep-beaune.com**

BESANÇON Hôtel Charles Quint P €€

3 rue du Chapitre, 25000 ***Tel*** *03 81 82 05 49* ***Fax*** *03 81 82 61 45* ***Rooms*** *9*

A charming hotel situated in the historic center. The tastefully decorated interior combines 18th-century architecture with modern amenities. The rooms are elegant without being ostentatious, the best are those with a small terrace overlooking the garden. Breakfast is served in a wood-paneled salon, or outside in fine weather. **www.hotel-charlesquint.com**

BOUILLAND Le Vieux Moulin P €€

Le Village, 21420 ***Tel*** *03 80 21 51 16* ***Fax*** *03 80 21 59 90* ***Rooms*** *26*

A recently renovated watermill set in the Rhône valley in this spectacular Burgundy village. Modern, comfortable rooms with simple, stylish furnishings. Views of either the river or the surrounding countryside. Sauna, Jacuzzi, and fitness center. Renowned contemporary restaurant. Closed Jan–mid-Mar. **www.le-moulin-de-bouilland.com**

CHABLIS Hostellerie des Clos P €€

Rue Jules-Rathier, 89800 ***Tel*** *03 86 42 10 63* ***Fax*** *03 86 42 17 11* ***Rooms*** *36*

The owner has renovated a medieval convent in the middle of this famed wine village. A charming atmosphere with comfortable, modern rooms. One of the best restaurants in the region (Michelin-starred), with a wine list to match. Terrace overlooks a delightful garden and vineyards. Three rooms have wheelchair access. **www.hostellerie-des-clos.fr**

CHABLIS Le Bergerand's €€

4 rue des Moulins, 89800 ***Tel*** *03 86 18 96 08* ***Fax*** *03 86 18 96 09* ***Rooms*** *18*

This popular bed & breakfast on the edge of the River Serein is the perfect place to stop over and sample the local wines. The rooms are bright and gaily decorated and there is a comfortable lounge bar, a tea room, a hammam, and a Jacuzzi. A buffet breakfast is available, and picnic baskets are prepared on request. **bergerand-belleetoile@wanadoo.fr**

CHAGNY Lameloise €€€

36 pl d'Armes, 71150 ***Tel*** *03 85 87 65 65* ***Fax*** *03 85 87 03 57* ***Rooms*** *16*

Luxury hotel and gastronomic restaurant situated in an elegant Burgundian house, which has stood for nearly a century in the small town square. Ample rooms have impeccable bathrooms. The refined classic decor includes oak beamed ceilings and period furniture. The restaurant is excellent. Closed mid-Dec–end-Jan. **www.lameloise.fr**

CHAILLY-SUR-ARMANÇON Château de Chailly €€€€€

Rue Dessous, 21320 ***Tel*** *03 80 90 30 30* ***Fax*** *03 80 90 30 00* ***Rooms*** *45*

One façade of this beautifully restored château is ornately Renaissance, while another recalls the building's medieval heritage. Luxury accommodations with spacious, meticulously maintained rooms. Facilities include a golf course, tennis, Jacuzzi, Turkish bath, and four eateries. **www.chailly.com**

DIJON Le Jacquemart €

32 rue Verrerie, 21000 ***Tel*** *03 80 60 09 60* ***Fax*** *03 80 60 09 69* ***Rooms*** *31*

In the heart of the city, near the Palais des Ducs, the Musée des Beaux Arts, and the lucky owl. An attractive 18th-century bourgeois house with decent-sized rooms and antique-style furniture. The decor is somber, but characterful. Quiet and comfortable. Continental breakfast. **www.hotel-lejacquemart.fr**

DIJON Hostellerie du Chapeau Rouge €€€

5 rue Michelet, 21000 ***Tel*** *03 80 50 88 88* ***Fax*** *03 80 50 88 89* ***Rooms*** *30*

Charming 16th-century hotel located in the heart of the city. The well-worn floorboards and period fireplaces still exist, but the decor is contemporary. Chic, individually decorated rooms vary in style from Asiatic to Baroque, romantic to feng shui. Creative, gastronomic cuisine is served in the glass-domed dining room. **www.chapeau-rouge.fr**

DOLE la Chaumière €€

346 av du Maréchal-Juin, 39100 ***Tel*** *03 84 70 72 40* ***Fax*** *03 84 79 25 60* ***Rooms*** *19*

This ancient farmhouse, outside the city center of the charming former capital of Comté, has authentic furniture that matches the ambience. Elegant and comfortable, well-maintained and soundproofed rooms ensure a tranquil night. Exceptional restaurant with Michelin-starred creative cuisine. **www.la-chaumiere.info**

GEVREY-CHAMBERTIN Hôtel les Grands Crus €€

Rte des Grands Crus, 21220 ***Tel*** *03 80 34 34 15* ***Fax*** *03 80 51 89 07* ***Rooms*** *24*

A light, airy hotel with wonderful views over the grands crus vineyards. Located in the heart of the Côte de Nuits, this country house built in a typical Burgundian style has traditionally furnished rooms that overlook the garden. The comfy lounge centers around an open fireplace. **www.hoteldesgrandscrus.com**

JOIGNY La Côte St Jacques €€€

14 faubourg de Paris, 89300 ***Tel*** *03 86 62 09 70* ***Fax*** *03 86 91 49 70* ***Rooms*** *31*

Smartly renovated hotel overlooking the River Yonne, with a delightful garden leading to the water's edge. Soft, harmonious colors and contemporary furniture create a pleasing ambience. Superb facilities: spa, private boat for guests, winter lounge with open fire, and summer lounge with terrace. The restaurant is outstanding. **www.cotesaintjacques.com**

LA BUSSIERE-SUR-OUCHE Abbaye de la Bussière €€€€

La Bussière-sur-Ouche, 21360 ***Tel*** *03 80 49 02 49* ***Fax*** *03 80 49 05 23* ***Rooms*** *15*

A superb conversion of a 12th-century abbey surrounded by a tranquil park. Each room has a view of the grounds with its 52 types of tree and ornamental lake. Two fine Michelin-starred restaurants are presided over by award-winning chef Olivier Elzer. A perfect base for visiting the Burgundy vineyards. **www.relaischateaux.com/bussiere**

LEVERNOIS Hostellerie de Levernois €€€

Rue du Golf, 21200 ***Tel*** *03 80 24 73 58* ***Fax*** *03 80 22 78 00* ***Rooms*** *26*

Not far from Beaune, in the heart of the Burgundy countryside nestles this classic 19th-century manor house. Set in a park with a small river running through it, a relaxing stay is guaranteed. The rooms retain traces of the era, with parquet floors and Burgundy tiles, yet the facilities are up to date. A converted barn houses an authentic bistro. **www.levernois.com**

MALBUISSON Hôtel Le Lac €

31 Grand Rue, 25160 ***Tel*** *03 81 69 34 80* ***Fax*** *03 81 69 35 44* ***Rooms*** *54*

Perched above the lake of St-Point in the Jura mountains, this imposing, elegant 1930s building has prettily decorated rooms, some with a lake view. The atmosphere is comfortable and pleasant, although service is abrupt – but that's normal for the region. Great buffet breakfast. **www.hotel-le-lac.fr**

MALBUISSON Le Bon Acceuil €

Rue de la Source, 25160 ***Tel*** *03 81 69 30 58* ***Fax*** *03 81 69 37 60* ***Rooms*** *12*

Situated between the forest and the shores of the spectacular Lac St Point is this friendly, intimate hotel. Rooms are spacious and comfortable with simple pinewood furniture and homely fabrics creating a cozy ambience. The restaurant serves outstanding contemporary cuisine, remaining faithful to the local produce. **www.le-bon-accueil.fr**

MARTAILLY-LES-BRANCION La Montagne de Brancion €€

Col de Brancion, 71700 ***Tel*** *03 85 51 12 40* ***Fax*** *03 85 51 18 64* ***Rooms*** *19*

East of Tournus, perched on a hillside a few steps away from the medieval village, this hotel has a panoramic view of the surrounding countryside. All rooms face east looking out over the Mâconnais mountains and the vineyards. The bright, prettily-decorated rooms have modern furnishings. The restaurant is highly recommended. **www.brancion.com**

NANS-SOUS-STE-ANNE A l'Ombre du Château €€

6 rue du Château, 25330 ***Tel*** *03 81 86 54 72* ***Fax*** *03 81 86 43 29* ***Rooms*** *4*

Located southwest of Ornans, this converted 18th-century stone outbuilding of a château is set in a vast wooded park. Well-kept rooms have been carefully and tastefully restored. There is a generous breakfast with homemade pastries. The American owners aim to please. Closed Nov–Apr. **www.frenchcountryretreat.com**

NANTOUX Domaine de la Combotte €€

2 La Combotte, 21190 ***Tel*** *03 80 26 02 66* ***Fax*** *03 80 26 07 84* ***Rooms*** *5*

Near Beaune, this family-run wine estate offers *chambres d'hôte*. Large comfortable rooms, one with wheelchair access and one family room. Well-equipped, with modern decor. The owners delight in sharing their passion for wine and truffles. **www.lacombotte.com**

NEVERS Clos Ste Marie €

25 rue du Petit-Mouësse, 58000 ***Tel*** *03 86 71 94 50* ***Fax*** *03 86 71 94 69* ***Rooms*** *17*

After visiting the sights of Nevers, unwind in this attractive, calm hotel just five-minutes from the pedestrianized center. Pretty, bright, and well-proportioned rooms are furnished with quaint fabrics and antique furniture. The flower-filled garden can be enjoyed while having breakfast on the shady terrace. **www.clos-sainte-marie.fr**

NITRY Auberge de la Beursaudière €

5 & 7 rue Hyacinthe-Gautherin, 89310 ***Tel*** *03 86 33 69 70* ***Fax*** *03 86 33 69 60* ***Rooms*** *11*

Mid-way between Auxerre, Chablis, and Vézelay stands this hotel housed in a former 12th-century priory. The attractive bedrooms have each been named after ancient trades: *Le Sabotier*, *La Dentellière*, *La Repasseuse*. The best, *Le Vigneron* and *L'Ecrivain*, are roomy and elegant. A buffet breakfast is served in a former wine cellar. **www.bersaudiere.com**

NUITS-ST-GEORGES Hôtel la Gentilhommière €€

13 vallée de la Serrée, 21700 ***Tel*** *03 80 61 12 06* ***Fax*** *03 80 61 30 33* ***Rooms*** *41*

This former 16th-century hunting lodge with its typical Burgundy tiled roof is now a beautiful hotel and renowned restaurant. The bedrooms are classically furnished, and the suites are decorated in styles from colonial to zen. Well-mastered cuisine. Terrace overlooks the river. **www.lagentilhommiere.fr**

POLIGNY Hostellerie des Monts de Vaux €€€

Monts Vaux, 39800 ***Tel*** *03 84 37 12 50* ***Fax*** *03 84 37 09 07* ***Rooms*** *10*

Run by the Carrion family since 1967, this hotel occupies an elegant coaching inn on the outskirts of Poligny, in lovely gardens. The rooms are decorated in a bourgeois style with antique furniture. Refined atmosphere. Good Jura cuisine and wine in the restaurant. Tennis. **www.hostellerie.com**

PONT-SUR-YONNE Hostellerie de L'Ecu €

3 rue Carnot, 89140 ***Tel*** *03 86 67 01 00* ***Fax*** *03 86 96 31 20* ***Rooms*** *6*

A few kilometers northwest of the Sens lies this traditional hotel and restaurant, an ancient staging post, which retains its rustic charm. Rooms are well maintained and offer good value for money; the best are spacious and bright, but furnishings in some are dated. The restaurant proposes traditional Burgundy fare. **www.hostellerie-ecu.fr**

PORT-LESNEY Château de Germigney €€€€

Le Parc, 39600 ***Tel*** *03 84 73 85 85* ***Fax*** *03 84 73 88 88* ***Rooms*** *20*

This hotel is located just 4 miles (6 km) from Arc-et-Senans in its own grounds bordering the Loue river. This exquisite château has tastefully decorated rooms with modern facilities. Smaller, less expensive rooms are in the annex. Exceptional restaurant and natural water pool. Relaxed and unstuffy service. **www.chateaudegermigney.com**

SAULIEU Le Relais Bernard Loiseau €€€€€

2 rue d'Argentine, 21210 ***Tel*** *03 80 90 53 53* ***Fax*** *03 80 64 08 92* ***Rooms*** *33*

A renowned hotel and acclaimed restaurant established by the late Bernard Loiseau. Modern comfort and traditional Burgundy furnishings – wood-paneled walls, red floor tiles. The refined rooms have either a fireplace or balcony overlooking the gardens à l'Anglaise. Fine service. **www.bernard-loiseau.com**

ST-AMOUR-BELLEVUE L'Auberge du Paradis €€

Le Plâtre-Durand, 71570 ***Tel*** *03 85 37 10 26* ***Rooms*** *8*

A young dynamic couple have tastefully renovated this auberge. The bedrooms take their names from different spices and are decorated with style and originality. Chic, contemporary decor with open-plan bathrooms. Some rooms have balconies overlooking the garden. Breakfast is copious. Good restaurant. **www.aubergeduparadis.fr**

ST-GERVAIS-EN-VALLIERE Moulin d'Hauterive €€

Hameau de Chaublanc, 71350 ***Tel*** *03 85 91 55 56* ***Fax*** *03 85 91 89 65* ***Rooms*** *20*

Not far from Beaune, in a secluded setting on the bank of the Dheune river, this converted watermill was built in the 12th century by the monks of Citeaux abbey. Each room is unique, tastefully furnished with antiques. The owner-chef serves inventive home cooking. One room has wheelchair access. **www.moulinhauterive.com**

Key to Price Guide *see p550* **Key to Symbols** *see back cover flap*

VALLÉE DE COUSIN Hostellerie du Moulins des Ruats P 🍴 €€

D427, 89200 ***Tel*** *03 86 34 97 00* ***Fax*** *03 86 31 65 47* ***Rooms*** *25*

A few kilometers from the old fortified town of Avallon, in the valley formed by the River Cousin, lies this former flour mill, now a classic hotel-restaurant. Comfortable, charming rooms with traditional furnishings have views over the garden or the river; some with a terrace. Restaurant serves classic cuisine. Closed mid-Nov–mid-Feb. **www.moulindesruats.com**

VEZELAY L'Espérance P 🍴 ≋ 🚸 ▤ €€€€

St-Père-sous-Vézelay, 89450 ***Tel*** *03 86 33 39 10* ***Fax*** *03 86 33 26 15* ***Rooms*** *27*

The guest rooms here are in three buildings: the main building has classic furnishings, Moulin has rustic charm, and Pré des Marguerites is contemporary, with terraces overlooking the garden. Wonderful restaurant, excellent but expensive wines, and impeccable service. **www.marc-meneau-esperance.com**

VILLENEUVE-SUR-YONNE La Lucerne aux Chouettes 🍴 €€

7 quai Bretoche, 89500 ***Tel*** *03 86 87 18 26* ***Fax*** *03 86 87 18 26* ***Rooms*** *4*

On the banks of the river, four typical Burgundian 17th-century houses have been converted into sophisticated *chambres d'hôtes*, all with a river view. The individually decorated rooms have oak beams, four-poster beds, *toile de Jouy* fabric, antique furniture, and hand-painted bathroom tiles. Charming dining room and terrace. **www.lesliecaron-auberge.com**

VONNAS Georges Blanc P 🍴 ≋ 🚸 ▤ €€€€

Pl Marché, 01540 ***Tel*** *04 74 50 90 90* ***Fax*** *04 74 50 08 80* ***Rooms*** *41*

Sumptuous hotel-restaurant in an ancient timbered and brick mansion, surrounded by a garden. The luxurious rooms were decorated by Pierre Chaduc. The atmosphere sways between refinement and opulence; the decor mixes Louis XIII and rustic styles. Most bathrooms have Jacuzzis. Spa with sauna. **www.georgesblanc.com**

THE MASSIF CENTRAL

BEAULIEU-SUR-DORDOGNE Manoir de Beaulieu P 🍴 🚸 €€

4 pl Champ de Mars, 19120 ***Tel*** *05 55 91 01 34* ***Fax*** *05 55 91 23 57* ***Rooms*** *25*

Situated in the main square of this pretty village, this traditional hotel was founded in 1913. The rooms have been nicely renovated and are decorated in different styles; whether rustic or modern each one is comfortably sized with a well-maintained bathroom. The lounge bar has comfy leather chairs. **www.manoirdebeaulieu.com**

BELCASTEL Du Vieux Pont P 🍴 ▤ €€

Le Bourg, 12390 ***Tel*** *05 65 64 52 29* ***Fax*** *05 65 64 44 32* ***Rooms*** *7*

Being lulled to sleep by the murmuring of the river is just one of the attractions of this unpretentious hotel. Rooms are spacious, light, and airy, and all have river views. Across the medieval cobbled bridge, the same family also runs an imaginative but affordable restaurant. **www.hotelbelcastel.com**

BÉNÉVENT L'ABBAYE Le Cèdre P 🍴 ≋ 🍸 ♿ €

Rue de l'Oiseau, 23210 ***Tel*** *05 55 81 59 99* ***Fax*** *05 55 81 59 98* ***Rooms*** *16*

In the lush countryside northwest of Aubusson lies this classic hotel and restaurant. Behind the austere 18th-century granite façade hides a contemporary interior. Rooms range from romantic, with four-poster beds, to simple and plainly furnished. The beautiful garden has a terrace shaded by a monumental cedar tree. Closed Jan–Feb.

CHAMALIERES Hôtel Radio ⇅ P 🍴 ▤ €€

43 av Pierre et Marie Curie, 63400 ***Tel*** *04 73 30 87 83* ***Fax*** *04 73 36 42 44* ***Rooms*** *26*

Built in the 1930s, this Art Deco hotel on a hill overlooking Clermont-Ferrand retains its original mosaics, mirrors, and decorative ironwork, alongside radio memorabilia. Spacious rooms have period furnishings, some with balconies. First-class restaurant and attentive service. **www.hotel-radio.fr**

CONQUES Hôtel Ste Foy ⇅ P 🍴 🚸 ▤ €€

Le Bourg, 12320 ***Tel*** *05 65 69 84 03* ***Fax*** *05 65 72 81 04* ***Rooms*** *17*

Facing the much-visited abbey in one of the most charming Aveyron villages, this ancient 17th-century inn retains traces of its rustic past. Old stone walls, low ceilings and oak beams are complemented by elegant furniture and modern amenities. Idyllic interior courtyard, and shady terrace. Restaurant recommended. Closed Nov–Easter. **www.hotelsaintefoy.fr**

LAGUIOLE Michel Bras ⇅ P 🍴 🚸 ▤ ♿ €€€€€

Route de l'Aubrac, 12210 ***Tel*** *05 65 51 18 20* ***Fax*** *05 65 48 47 02* ***Rooms*** *15*

Built on a hillside with a spectacular view of the Aubrac plain houses, this futuristic construction is one of France's most acclaimed hotel-restaurants. The amply-sized rooms, with floor-to-ceiling windows, are contemporary and minimalist with modern facilities. The restaurant is a gourmet's paradise. Closed Nov–Easter. **www.michel-bras.fr**

LIMOGES Domaine de Faugeras ⇅ P 🍴 ≋ 🍸 ▤ ♿ €€

Allée de Faugeras, 87000 ***Tel*** *555346622* ***Fax*** *555341805* ***Rooms*** *9*

Located in its own park on the edge of the city center, this 18th-century manor house is a peaceful place to stay. Cultural heritage blends successfully with modernity. The rooms are contemporary in style, and well-equipped. The pleasant lounge has an open fireplace and there is a spa and brasserie. **www.domainedefaugeras.fr**

LIMOGES Hôtel Jeanne d'Arc €€

17 av du Général-de-Gaulle, 87000 ***Tel*** *05 55 77 67 77* ***Fax*** *05 55 79 86 75* ***Rooms*** *50*

A surprisingly atmospheric hotel near Limoges train station and within walking distance of the center. The building has been tastefully renovated without losing its 19th-century feel. The rooms are stylish and equipped with all the three-star comforts you'd expect. **www.hoteljeannedarc-limoges.fr**

MENDE Hôtel de France €€

9 bd Lucien-Arnault, 48000 ***Tel*** *04 66 65 00 04* ***Fax*** *04 66 49 30 47* ***Rooms*** *27*

This entirely renovated staging post, dating from 1856, offers rooms that are cozy, comfortable, and stylish; the quietest ones overlook the gardens. Relax in front of a roaring fire in winter, or enjoy breakfast on the pretty terrece in summer. A friendly family-run hotel. **www.hoteldefrance-mende.com**

MILLAU Château de Creissels €

Rte de St-Afrique, 12100 ***Tel*** *05 65 60 16 59* ***Fax*** *05 65 61 24 63* ***Rooms*** *30*

A short distance from Millau is this 12th-century château with stunning views over the Tarn valley and the Millau viaduct. Rooms in the 1970s extension are comfortable and quiet, with balconies overlooking the gardens. Enjoy local dishes in the stone-vaulted restaurant. Closed Jan–Feb. **www.chateau-de-creissels.com**

MONTSALVY Auberge Fleurie €

Pl du Barry, 15120 ***Tel*** *04 71 49 20 02* ***Fax*** *04 71 49 29 65* ***Rooms*** *7*

This ivy-clad village inn situated in the south of Auvergne, offers excellent value for money. The rustic charm of the original building is complemented by pretty, colorful fabrics in the individually decorated rooms. The largest rooms have canopied beds. Creative cuisine is served in the restaurant. Closed mid-Jan–mid-Feb. **www.auberge-fleurie.com**

MOUDEYRES Le Pré Bossu €€

43150 ***Tel*** *04 71 05 10 70* ***Fax*** *04 71 05 10 21* ***Rooms*** *6*

Authentic low, stone cottage with a thatched roof in the heart of the Auvergne countryside. The bedrooms, named after birds, are modern and comfortable with relaxing decor and furniture imported from Asia. There are homemade jams for breakfast and home-grown vegetables for dinner. Closed Nov–Easter. **www.auberge-pre-bossu.com**

PAILHEROLS Auberge des Montagnes €

Le Bourg, 15800 ***Tel*** *04 71 47 57 01* ***Fax*** *04 71 49 63 83* ***Rooms*** *23*

On the flanks of the Monts du Cantal, it's worth seeking out this cozy mountain auberge. In winter there are log fires; in summer head for the large garden with a children's play area. The restaurant attracts locals from miles around with its good-value country cooking. Treatments available in the spa. **www.auberge-des-montagnes.com**

PERIGNAT-LES-SARLIEVE Hostellerie St Martin €€

Allée de Bonneval, 63170 ***Tel*** *04 73 79 81 00* ***Fax*** *04 73 79 81 01* ***Rooms*** *32*

Located a few kilometers south of Clermont-Ferrand, this splendid Cistercian abbey dates from the 14th century. It now houses a comfortable hotel surrounded by a peaceful park. There are three styles of rooms: standard (in the modern annex), and superior and deluxe in the ancient building. **www.hostelleriestmartin.com**

PEYRELEAU Grand Hôtel de la Muse et du Rozier €€

Rue des Gorges du Tarn, 12720 ***Tel*** *05 65 62 60 01* ***Fax*** *05 65 62 63 88* ***Rooms*** *38*

This century-old hotel sits in an idyllic spot among the trees at the water's edge. The quaint exterior contrasts with the contemporary design inside; natural materials, white walls, and light create a purist atmosphere. The rooms all have river views. There is a mini-beach at the riverside, and a good restaurant. Closed mid-Nov–Apr. **www.hotel-delamuse.fr**

PONTGIBAUD Hôtel Saluces €

Rue de la Martille, 15140 ***Tel*** *04 71 40 70 82* ***Fax*** *04 71 40 71 74* ***Rooms*** *8*

Located in the center of this beautiful Renaissance town, this 15th–16th-century house looks like a small château. It is family-run and offers a warm welcome. The rooms are large, attractively decorated, and each has its own bath/shower. There is a bar, and afternoon teas are served in the salon. **www.hotel-salers.fr**

RODEZ La Ferme de Bourran €€

Quartier de Bourran, 12000 ***Tel*** *05 65 73 62 62* ***Fax*** *05 65 72 14 15* ***Rooms*** *7*

This small hotel with modern bedrooms occupies a renovated farmhouse, which sits on a hillock in a secluded spot near Rodez. Bright contemporary and comfortable rooms are painted in white, gray, and ivory tones. The relaxing lounge has a lovely open fireplace, and there is a large terrace for breakfast in summer. **www.fermedebourran.com**

SALERS Le Bailliage €

Rue Notre-Dame, 15410 ***Tel*** *04 71 40 71 95* ***Fax*** *04 71 40 74 90* ***Rooms*** *27*

Recently upgraded to three stars, the Bailliage is one of the nicest places to stay in this attractive mountain town. Cheaper rooms occupy a separate annex, but all are comfortable and some positively jolly. There's a garden and a restaurant in which to sample Salers cheese. Closed mid-Nov–mid-Mar. **www.salers-hotel-bailliage.com**

ST-ALBAN-SUR-LIMAGNOLE Relais St Roch €€

Château de la Chastre, chemin du Carreirou, 48120 ***Tel*** *04 66 31 55 48* ***Fax*** *04 66 31 53 26* ***Rooms*** *9*

The pretty granite pink stone building contrasts with the lush green of the surrounding countryside. The rooms in this 18th-century mansion are classically decorated and elegantly furnished with antiques and tapestries. Cozy lounge bar with over 300 whiskies. The owners have a delightful restaurant nearby. Closed Nov–Easter. **www.relais-saint-roch.fr**

ST-ARCONS-D'ALLIER Les Deux Abbesses €€€€

Le Château, 43300 ***Tel*** *04 71 74 03 08* ***Fax*** *04 71 74 05 30* ***Rooms*** *6*

An entire tiny hamlet has been restored to form this outstanding hotel. Four cottages house the rooms, cobbled streets serve as corridors, and the château houses a reception and dining room. Romantic rooms, and fantasy-style bathrooms: an old wine *cuve* serves as a bathtub, an animal's trough as a sink. Closed Nov–Easter. **www.lesdeuxabbesses.com**

ST-BONNET-LE-FROID Le Clos des Cimes €€€€

Le Bourg, 43290 ***Tel*** *04 71 59 93 72* ***Fax*** *04 71 59 93 40* ***Rooms*** *12*

Gourmet pilgrims compete for rooms at this fabulous auberge deep in the countryside. The prize is a luxurious room with original artworks and stunning views over the valley. The Marcon family runs the place with tremendous attention to detail. Prepare to be pampered. Cooking lessons available. Closed Jan–Easter. **www.regismarcon.fr**

ST GERVAIS D'AUVERGNE Castel-Hôtel 1904 €

Rue de Castel, 63390 ***Tel*** *04 73 85 70 42* ***Fax*** *04 73 85 84 39* ***Rooms*** *15*

Rooms are surprisingly affordable in this turreted château where period furniture, oak beams, and highly polished floors ensure a homely atmosphere. Guest rooms are set round an attractive courtyard. There are two good restaurants: one rustic, the other grand. Closed Nov–Easter. **www.castel-hotel-1904.com**

ST-MARTIN-VALMEROUX Hostellerie de la Maronne €€

Le Theil, 15140 ***Tel*** *04 71 69 20 33* ***Fax*** *04 71 69 28 22* ***Rooms*** *21*

Not far from Salers, encircled by the Auvergne volcanoes, is this 19th-century manor house. Renovated with taste, it houses sunny, prettily decorated rooms with stylish classic furnishings. Discover the park by following one of the suggested walks, or take a siesta in the tree house. The restaurant is one of the best in the region. **www.maronne.com**

ST-PRIEST-BRAMEFANT Château de Maulmont €€

Maulmont, 63310 ***Tel*** *04 70 59 14 95* ***Fax*** *04 70 59 11 88* ***Rooms*** *22*

Superb 19th-century château surrounded by parkland and lovely gardens. Well-equipped, spacious bedrooms feature elegant, classic decor, and period furniture. The oak-paneled dining room serves delicious traditional fare. Boating and golf are nearby. Closed mid-Nov–Apr. **www.château-maulmont.com**

VICHY Aletti Palace Hotel €€€

3 pl Joseph-Aletti, 03200 ***Tel*** *04 70 30 20 20* ***Fax*** *04 70 98 13 82* ***Rooms*** *129*

Vichy's top hotel oozes Belle-Epoque grandeur from its stately reception hall to the crystal chandeliers. Guest rooms have been modernized but are tranquil and well proportioned. Fine restaurant and a terraced pool. In World War II, the Aletti was home to Vichy's Minister of War. **www.aletti.fr**

VITRAC Auberge de la Tomette €€

Le Bourg, 15220 ***Tel*** *04 71 64 70 94* ***Fax*** *04 71 64 77 11* ***Rooms*** *16*

A lovely country retreat set in huge gardens with a games area for children. Recent enhancements include a heated pool, sauna, and *hammam*. The rooms are restful and spacious; six designed for families. Equal thought and attention goes into the cooking. Closed Nov–Easter. **www.auberge-la-tomette.com**

YGRANDE Château d'Ygrande €€€

Le Mont, 3320 ***Tel*** *04 70 66 33 11* ***Fax*** *04 70 66 33 63* ***Rooms*** *19*

A meticulously renovated, quality hotel is housed in this grand 19th-century building. The rooms are beautiful, bright, and elegant. A vast park offers walking, bicycling, horseback riding, and boating. Inside there is a *hammam*, fitness center, sauna, and billiards. Good restaurant serving local produce. Closed Jan–Mar. **www.chateauygrande.fr**

THE RHONE VALLEY & FRENCH ALPS

ANNECY Hôtel Palais de l'Isle €€

13 rue Perrière, 74000 ***Tel*** *04 50 45 86 87* ***Rooms*** *33*

Opposite the Palais de l'Isle, this hotel sits like a Venetian *palazzo* on the edge of the Thouin canal. The renovated rooms in the 18th-century house are comfortable and well-equipped, with modern decor using neutral colors. The best rooms are found on the canal side. **www.hoteldupalaisdelisle.com**

BAGNOLS Château de Bagnols €€€€€

Le Bourg, 69620 ***Tel*** *04 74 71 40 00* ***Fax*** *04 74 71 40 49* ***Rooms*** *21*

In 1987 Lady Hamlyn restored this château north of Lyon, surrounded by Beaujolais vineyards, and created a luxury hotel. The 13th-century building has turrets, moat, and drawbridge. The rooms are richly decorated in velvet, silk, and antiques. Michelin-starred restaurant. **www.chateaudebagnols.com**

BRIANÇON Hôtel Cristol €

6 rte d'Italie, 05100 ***Tel*** *04 92 20 20 11* ***Fax*** *04 92 21 02 58* ***Rooms*** *24*

Well-kept, traditional hotel. The recently redecorated rooms are modern, airy, and bright; some have balconies with a view of the Vauban fortifications. Friendly service, and children are well catered for here. Charming dining room serves interesting themed menus. **www.hotel-cristol-briancon.fr**

CHALMAZEL Château de Marcilly Talaru €€

42920 ***Tel*** *04 77 24 88 09* ***Fax*** *04 77 24 87 07* ***Rooms*** *5*

Situated at an altitude of 3,000 ft (900 m), Chalmazel becomes a small ski resort in winter. The bedrooms at this hotel reflect the overall grandeur of the magnificent fortified medieval château, with four-poster beds and classic furnishings. There are well-equipped bathrooms, too. Breakfast included. *Table d'hôte* on request. **www.chateaudechalmazel.com**

CHAMBERY Hôtel des Princes €€

4 rue de Boigne, 73000 ***Tel*** *04 79 33 45 36* ***Fax*** *04 79 70 31 47* ***Rooms*** *45*

Situated in the grandest section of the Old Town, near La Fontaine des Elephants, this charmingly old-fashioned hotel has quiet, comfortable rooms, though not very spacious. The service is welcoming and friendly. There are several restaurants nearby to choose from. **www.hoteldesprinces.eu**

CHAMBERY Château de Candie €€€

Rue du Bois de Candie, 73000 ***Tel*** *04 79 96 63 00* ***Fax*** *04 79 96 63 10* ***Rooms*** *35*

Dominating the valley of Chambèry, this splendid hotel has a panoramic view of the mountains. A 14th-century Savoyard house has been beautifully transformed and offers sumptuous bedrooms decorated with refinement. A tranquil spot surrounded by its own park. Excellent restaurant serving classic gourmet cuisine. **www.chateaudecandie.com**

CHAMONIX MONT BLANC Le Hameau Albert 1er €€€€

119 impasse du Montenvers, 74402 ***Tel*** *04 50 53 05 09* ***Fax*** *04 50 55 95 48* ***Rooms*** *36*

Part of a hotel complex including the traditional hotel Albert 1er, the authentic and unusual Chalet Soli, and the chic La Ferme. The large chalet-hotel has stunning views of Mont Blanc. The well-proportioned rooms have elegant designer furniture. Two good restaurants, one with a Michelin star. Sauna. **www.hameaualbert.fr**

CHANTERMERLE-LES-GRIGNAN Le Parfum Bleu €€

26230 ***Tel*** *04 75 98 54 21* ***Fax*** *04 75 98 54 21* ***Rooms*** *5*

The sound of cicadas and aroma of lavender – this is quintessential Drôme-Provençale. A beautifully restored stone farmhouse with bright blue shutters offers comfortable *chambres d'hôtes*, each with a private entrance. The rooms have original stone floors and simple, modern furnishings. Buffet breakfast. *Table d'hôte* on request. **www.parfum-bleu.com**

CHONAS L'AMBALLAN Domaine de Clairefontaine €€

Chemin des Fontanettes, 38121 ***Tel*** *04 74 58 81 52* ***Fax*** *04 74 58 80 93* ***Rooms*** *28*

Set in a magnificent park in a small village south of Vienne, among 300-year-old trees, this former manor house has impeccably furnished rooms. The recently built annex has more modern rooms with balconies. The restaurant has a good reputation but can be inconsistent. **www.domaine-de-clairefontaine.fr**

CLIOUSCLAT La Treille Muscate €

Le Village, 26270 ***Tel*** *04 75 63 13 10* ***Rooms*** *12*

A pleasant Provençale inn in a village renowned for its pottery. The bedrooms are individually decorated: choose from Basque red, pastel blue, or African. Some rooms have south-facing balconies with views of the countryside. The vaulted dining room serves local cuisine. Breakfast is served in the garden on sunny days. **www.latreillemuscate.com**

CORDON Le Cordonant €€

Les Darbaillets, 74700 ***Tel*** *04 50 58 34 56* ***Fax*** *04 50 47 95 57* ***Rooms*** *16*

A friendly family-run hotel at this ski resort west of Chamonix, the trim, well-kept chalet has a garden. The rooms are comfortable, with pretty rustic furniture. The best rooms have great views of Mont Blanc. The restaurant serves hearty alpine cuisine. Good value. **www.lecordonant.fr**

DIVONNE-LES-BAINS Château de Divonne €€€

115 rue des Bains, 01220 ***Tel*** *04 50 20 00 32* ***Fax*** *04 50 20 03 73* ***Rooms*** *34*

From this charming 19th-century mansion set in a large park, not far from Geneva, there are panoramic views of Mont Blanc and Lake Geneva. Inside is a monumental staircase. The rooms are richly furnished. Tennis courts on site, and golf course nearby. Classic cuisine. **www.chateau-divonne.com**

EVIAN-LES-BAINS Hôtel Royal Palace €€€€€

Rive Sud du Lac de Genève, 74500 ***Tel*** *04 50 26 85 00* ***Fax*** *04 50 75 38 40* ***Rooms*** *144*

An imposing hotel situated on the water's edge by Lake Geneva. Four restaurants, jogging trails, spa treatments, a private garden, and a children's club are all on offer. Rooms and suites are tastefully decorated and most have impressive views over the lake. **www.evianroyalresort.com**

GRENOBLE Splendid Hôtel €€

22 rue Thiers, 38000 ***Tel*** *04 76 46 33 12* ***Fax*** *04 76 46 35 24* ***Rooms*** *45*

Chic, centrally located hotel in a quiet location, with a walled garden. The guest rooms range from classical to modern, with gaily painted frescoes. Efficient service and amenities. Continental and *à la carte* breakfast served in the dining room, or garden terrace. **www.splendid-hotel.com**

GRESY-SUR-ISÈRE La Tour de Pacoret €€

Montailleur, 73460 ***Tel*** *04 79 37 91 59* ***Fax*** *04 79 37 93 84* ***Rooms*** *11*

The tower has been here since 1283 when it was erected to guard the Combe de Savoie. Beside it, this quality hotel with stylish rooms has developed. The bedrooms, each named after a flower, are decorated in warm tones. The mountain scenery can be enjoyed from the terrace. Traditional dishes served. **www.savoie-hotel-pacoret.com**

LE POET LAVAL Les Hospitaliers €€

Vieux Village, 26160 ***Tel*** *04 75 46 22 32* ***Fax*** *04 75 46 49 99* ***Rooms*** *20*

A beautifully restored hotel in the center of a tiny hilltop medieval village east of Montélimar. The elegantly furnished bedrooms, in the old stone buildings, are spacious and quiet. The restaurant offers first-class service, excellent cuisine, and a wide range of good Rhône valley wines. **www.hotel-les-hospitaliers.com**

LES DEUX ALPES Chalet Hôtel Mounier €€

2 rue de la Chapelle, 38860 ***Tel*** *04 76 80 56 90* ***Fax*** *04 76 79 56 51* ***Rooms*** *46*

Now a quality hotel, this former alpine farm has plenty of character. Contemporary, yet ultracozy rooms have a chic, authentic chalet atmosphere. Well-equipped with up-to-date amenities, the hotel is constantly being upgraded. The lounge features an open fireplace. Good restaurant. Closed May–Jun & Sep–mid-Dec. **www.chalet-mounier.com**

LYON Hôtel des Artistes €€

8 rue Gaspard-André, 69002 ***Tel*** *04 78 42 04 88* ***Fax*** *04 78 42 93 76* ***Rooms*** *45*

Close to the place Bellecour, the Saône River and next door to the Théâtre des Célestins, this delightful hotel is a favorite haunt of actors. Pleasant, bright, airy rooms. Breakfast is served in an attractive room that is decorated with a Jean Cocteau-style fresco. **www.hoteldesartistes.fr**

LYON La Maison du Greillon €€

12 Montée du Greillon, 69009 ***Tel*** *04 72 29 10 97* ***Rooms*** *5*

This large building was once home to Lyon sculptor Joseph Chinard. Now a small and tranquil bed and breakfast with its own garden, fountain, and terrace, and great views of the Croix-Rousse and the Saône. The well-kept rooms have elegant classic furnishings. There is a roomy dining room and a kitchen for guests to use. **www.legreillon.com**

LYON Cour des Loges €€€€€

6 rue du Bœuf, 69005 ***Tel*** *04 72 77 44 44* ***Fax*** *04 72 40 93 61* ***Rooms*** *62*

This luxury hotel occupies four renovated Renaissance mansions around a central galleried courtyard in Vieux Lyon. The reception area has a stunning glass roof. The elegant rooms blend Renaissance and contemporary decor. The restaurant serves classic cuisine. **www.courdesloges.com**

MANIGOD Hôtel-Chalets de la Croix-Fry €€€€

Rte du Col de la Croix-Fry, 74230 ***Tel*** *04 50 44 90 16* ***Fax*** *04 50 44 94 87* ***Rooms*** *10*

High on a mountain pass east of Annecy, this delightful chalet-style hotel combines Alpine rustic with comfort in a friendly atmosphere. The wooden interior is charming, decorated with Savoyard furniture. The guest rooms are cozy. Closed May and October–November. **www.hotelchaletcroixfry.com**

MEGÈVE Les Fermes de Marie €€€€€

163 chemin de Riante Colline, 74120 ***Tel*** *04 50 93 03 10* ***Fax*** *04 50 93 09 84* ***Rooms*** *71*

Lovingly restored chalets with chic country-style rooms. The bedrooms reflect Savoyard charm with rustic furniture and decor in natural colors. The ambience is professional, yet relaxed and friendly. The facilities are superb: spa, sauna, Jacuzzi, hairdresser, games room, fitness center, and a good restaurant. Closed May–Jun. **www.fermesdemarie.com**

MONTELIMAR Sphinx €

19 bd Desmarais, 26200 ***Tel*** *04 75 01 86 64* ***Fax*** *04 75 52 34 21* ***Rooms*** *24*

Old-fashioned charm greets visitors to this former 17th-century *hôtel particulier*. Situated in the historic city center, it is surprisingly calm, with a private courtyard and delightful shady terrrace. Don't expect wide screen TVs or the lastest trend in decor, but relax in the comfortable, homely ambience. **www.sphinx-hotel.fr**

PEROUGES Hostellerie du Vieux Pérouges €€€€

Pl du Tilleuil, 01800 ***Tel*** *04 74 61 00 88* ***Fax*** *04 74 34 77 90* ***Rooms*** *28*

This historic inn is a filmmaker's dream, converted from 13th-century buildings and set in a medieval hilltop village. The four ancient houses are clustered around the main square. The decor is different in each house. Ultraclassic cuisine serving regional dishes with precision. **www.hostelleriedeperouges.com**

ROMANS SUR ISERE Hôtel l'Orée du Parc €€

6 av Gambetta, 26100 ***Tel*** *04 75 70 26 12* ***Fax*** *04 75 05 08 23* ***Rooms*** *10*

After visiting le Palais Idéal du Facteur Cheval, head 16 miles (25 km) south to Romans, and relax in this charming hotel. A tastefully renovated 20th-century manor house in its own park, all the rooms are nonsmoking and filled with modern, elegant furnishings. **www.hotel-oreeparc.com**

SERVAS Le Nid à Bibi €€

Lalleyriat, 1960 ***Tel*** *04 74 21 11 47* ***Fax*** *04 74 21 02 83* ***Rooms*** *5*

A peaceful night's sleep awaits at this adorable *chambre d'hôtes* next to Bourg. Cozy, comfortable, and well-equipped rooms each have a private bathroom. Guests enjoy a homely atmosphere and have use of the living area and garden. Hearty breakfast with homemade jams, pastries, and cold meats. *Table d'hôte* on request. **lenidabibi@wanadoo.fr**

ST-CYR-AU-MONT-D'OR L'Ermitage Hôtel €€€

Chemin de l'Ermitage Mont Cindre, 69450 ***Tel*** *04 72 19 69 69* ***Fax*** *04 72 19 69 71* ***Rooms*** *29*

Just 15-minutes from Lyon city center, this design establishment harmonizes different materials with success: concrete, wood, glass, aluminum, and stone. The rooms are luminous with quirky accessories, ultramodern equipment, and a view of Fourvière. Lyon specialties are served in the terrace restaurant. **www.ermitage-college-hotel.com**

ST-ETIENNE Mercure Parc de l'Europe ⇅ P 🍴 👤 ☰ €€

Rue Wuppertal, 42000 ***Tel*** *04 77 42 81 81* ***Fax*** *04 77 42 81 89* ***Rooms*** *120*

This large, practical, modern building lacks charm, but is conveniently situated for the city center. The hotel has undergone a facelift and the bedrooms are bright and well-maintained with fully equipped bathrooms. The interior has a theatrical theme. There is also a cozy bar and a contemporary restaurant serving local produce. **www.accor.com**

TALLOIRES Hôtel l'Abbaye P 🍴 👤 €€€

Chemin des Moines, 74290 ***Tel*** *04 50 60 77 33* ***Fax*** *04 50 60 78 81* ***Rooms*** *33*

This elegant hotel occupying a former 17th-century Benedictine abbey is beautifully situated on the shores of Lac d'Annecy. Cézanne used to be a regular guest. The large rooms have wonderfully decorated period ceilings and antique furniture. Attractive garden and good restaurant. **www.abbaye-talloires.com**

VAL D'ISERE Christiania ⇅ P 🍴 ≋ 👤 🍸 €€€€€

Chef Lieu, 73152 ***Tel*** *04 79 06 08 25* ***Fax*** *04 79 41 11 10* ***Rooms*** *70*

Splendid modern chalet with a magnificent view of the ski slopes at this popular resort for the rich and famous. Luxurious fully equipped rooms, all with balconies, are decorated in an elegant Alpine theme. Pamper yourself in the health and fitness center. Superb buffet breakfast. **www.hotel-christiania.com**

VALLON PONT D'ARC Le Clos des Bruyères P 🍴 ≋ 👤 €

Rte des Gorges, 07150 ***Tel*** *04 75 37 18 85* ***Fax*** *04 75 37 14 89* ***Rooms*** *32*

Situated in the Gorges d'Ardèche, this modern hotel, built in a Provençal style, has bedrooms that open onto the pool via a balcony or terrace. Family rooms are available. Rent a canoe or quad and take a picnic to explore the river and countryside. Nautical-themed restaurant. **www.closdesbruyeres.net**

POITOU & AQUITAINE

ARCACHON Hôtel Le Dauphin ⇅ P ≋ ☰ €€

7 av Gounod, 33120 ***Tel*** *05 56 83 02 89* ***Fax*** *05 56 54 84 90* ***Rooms*** *50*

This well-run hotel dating from the late 19th century is instantly recognizable from its red-and-white brickwork. It's located a few blocks back from the sea in a quiet residential district. Spick-and-span rooms have simple pine furnishings and white walls. **www.dauphin-arcachon.com**

BONNEUIL-MATOURS L'Olivier P €

11 rue du petit Bornais, 86210 ***Tel*** *05 49 02 73 53* ***Rooms*** *3*

This delightful bed and breakfast is on the edge of the Forêt de Moulière, close to Futuroscope, Chauvigny, Châtellerault, and Poitiers. The three bedrooms are homely and individually styled. One is in the attic and two have canopied beds. There is a living room and dining room for communal use and a delightful garden. **www.vienne-hotes-lolivier.com**

BORDEAUX La Maison du Lierre P €€

57 rue Huguerie, 33000 ***Tel*** *05 56 51 92 71* ***Fax*** *05 56 79 15 16* ***Rooms*** *12*

Close to Bordeaux's chic Golden Triangle, this small hotel – its homely atmosphere more like a *chambre d'hôte* - has been renovated with flair. Rooms are stylish. Generous homemade breakfasts may be served in the interior courtyard. It is wise to reserve ahead. **www.maisondulierre.com**

BORDEAUX La Maison Bord'Eaux P 🍴 €€€€

113 rue Albert Barraud, 33000 ***Tel*** *05 56 44 00 45* ***Fax*** *05 56 44 17 31* ***Rooms*** *6*

Wine lovers will enjoy this small boutique hotel where a large range of wines is available by the glass or bottle. The owners can also arrange wine-tasting visits to châteaux. Rooms look onto a garden where breakfast and meals are often served. Parking is available, which is rare for a city hotel. **www.lamaisonbord-eaux.com**

CAP-FERRET La Maison du Bassin 🍴 €€€

5 rue des Pionniers, 33950 ***Tel*** *05 56 60 60 63* ***Fax*** *05 56 03 71 47* ***Rooms*** *7 (plus 4 annex rooms)*

Ultrachic and highly sought-after address at the end of the Cap-Ferret peninsula. A colonial ambience is achieved with highly polished wood, cane chairs, and arty knick-knacks. Try one of the tasty tropical rums as an aperitif, before dining on the tropical veranda. Reservations by phone only. **www.lamasiondubassin.com**

CIERZAC Le Moulin de Cierzac P 🍴 €

Rte de Cognac, 17520 ***Tel*** *05 45 83 01 32* ***Fax*** *05 45 83 03 59* ***Rooms*** *7*

A short drive south of Cognac is this hotel-restaurant in a 17th-century mansion set in extensive grounds. Pleasant rooms contain exposed beams; some have river views. The restaurant serves local specialties. Afterwards, choose your *digestif* from a vast array of cognacs. **www.moulindecierzac.com**

COGNAC Les Pigeons Blancs P 🍴 👤 €€

110 rue Jules-Brisson, 16100 ***Tel*** *05 45 82 16 36* ***Fax*** *05 45 82 29 29* ***Rooms*** *6*

In the heart of the cognac vineyards, this 17th-century auberge offers a warm welcome and a handful of elegantly decorated rooms decked out with period furniture. Two are nonsmoking. Other facilities include an excellent restaurant and a garden. Baby-sitting available. **www.pigeonsblancs.com**

COULON Le Central P 🍴 ☰ €

4 rue d'Autremont, 79510 ***Tel*** *05 49 35 90 20* ***Fax*** *05 49 35 81 07* ***Rooms*** *13*

Situated in the mysterious fens of the Marais Poitevin, this traditional village hotel has been in the same family for three generations. The guest rooms are bright, clean, and tasteful. Downstairs is a deservedly popular restaurant. You'll need to reserve well ahead. Disabled access. **www.hotel-lecentral-coulon.com**

EUGENIE-LES-BAINS La Maison Rose P 🍴 ≋ 🍸 €€€

334 rue René Vielle, 40320 ***Tel*** *05 58 05 06 07* ***Fax*** *05 58 51 10 10* ***Rooms*** *31*

The illustrious chef Michel Guérard draws worshippers to Eugénie, a thermal spa dating back to the 18th century. This, the most modest of his five hotels, feels like a country house, from the rose-filled garden to the pretty guest rooms – not lavish but absolutely immaculate. Closed Dec–Jan. **www.michelguerard.com**

EUGENIE LES BAINS Les Prés d'Eugénie P 🍴 ≋ 🍸 ☰ €€€€€

334 rue René Vielle, 40320 ***Tel*** *05 58 05 06 07* ***Fax*** *05 58 51 10 10* ***Rooms*** *32*

Michel Guérard's highly acclaimed hotel has six gorgeous suites in addition to its simple but luxurious bedrooms. The 19th-century manor is famed for its *cuisine minceur* restaurants, which offer residents the option of losing weight while reveling in some of France's finest cooking. **www.michelguerard.com**

GRENADE-SUR-L'ADOUR Pain Adour et Fantaisie 🍴 🧒 ☰ €€

14-16 pl des Tilleuls, 40270 ***Tel*** *05 58 45 18 80* ***Fax*** *05 58 45 16 57* ***Rooms*** *11*

This elegant hotel overlooking Grenade's arcaded central square on one side, and the river on the other, is home to one of the region's best restaurants. In keeping with the hotel's 17th-century architecture, antiques, oak paneling, and parquet predominate. Spacious rooms. **www.chateauxhotels.com/fantaisie**

HOSSEGOR Les Hortensias du Lac P ≋ €€€

1578 av du Tour du Lac, 40150 ***Tel*** *05 58 43 99 00* ***Fax*** *05 58 43 42 81* ***Rooms*** *24*

This hotel, set in pine forests not far from the ocean and overlooking Hossegor lake, provides a peaceful retreat. Guest rooms in the 1930s villa are tranquil, with their neutral tones offset against dark wood, all with a terrace or balcony. Splendid champagne buffet breakfast. Closed mid-Nov–Easter. **www.hortensias-du-lac.com**

LA ROCHELLE Les Brises ⇅ P €€

Chemin de la Digue-Richelieu, rue Philippe Vincent 17000 ***Tel*** *05 46 43 89 37* ***Fax*** *05 46 43 27 97* ***Rooms*** *48*

A comfortable and popular hotel within walking distance of the vieux port and the bustling city center. It's worth paying extra for a seafront room. Not only are they more spacious, but they also benefit from balconies with wonderful views out to sea and the offshore islands. **www.hotellesbrises.eu**

LE BOIS-PLAGE-EN-RE Hôtel L'Océan P 🍴 ≋ €€

172 rue St-Martin, 17580 ***Tel*** *05 46 09 23 07* ***Fax*** *05 46 09 05 40* ***Rooms*** *29*

There's a real seaside feel to this hotel on the southern coast of the Île de Ré. Potted palms, giant parasols, and sun-bleached wooden decking outside; inside, pretty pastels and marine motifs for the rooms. Not surprisingly, ultrafresh fish dominates the restaurant menu. Massage and beauty treatments are available. **www.re-hotel-ocean.com**

MAGESCQ Relais de la Poste P 🍴 ≋ 🧒 🍸 ☰ €€€€

24, av de Maremne, 40140 ***Tel*** *05 58 47 70 25* ***Fax*** *05 58 47 76 17* ***Rooms*** *16*

This small and wonderfully relaxed hotel set in a 19th-century coaching inn has a garden and nicely landscaped pools. It combines comfort, celebrated cuisine, fine wines, and family tradition. You're not far from the sea here, with Bayonne and Biarritz within easy striking distance. Closed mid-Nov–Christmas. **www.relaisposte.com**

MARGAUX Le Pavillon de Margaux P 🍴 ≋ €€

3 rue Georges-Mandel, 33460 ***Tel*** *05 57 88 77 54* ***Fax*** *05 57 88 77 73* ***Rooms*** *14*

In the center of Margaux village, this handsome hotel provides a comfortable base for exploring the Médoc vineyards. Guest rooms, which are "sponsored" by local wine châteaux, are individually styled. Some have antiques and four-posters, others rattan and floral fabrics. **www.pavillonmargaux.com**

MARTHON Château de la Couronne P ≋ €€€€€

Château de la Couronne, 16380 ***Tel*** *05 45 62 29 96* ***Rooms*** *5*

A boutique château hotel and sometime film and TV location offering five suites decorated in a bold, contemporary style with original artworks. Everything is supplied for relaxation: three sitting rooms, a private movie theater, a billiard room, a music room, and a large expanse of private parkland. **www.chateaudelacouronne.com**

MONTBRON Hostellerie Château Ste-Catherine P 🍴 ≋ 🧒 €€

Rte de Marthon, 16220 ***Tel*** *05 45 23 60 03* ***Fax*** *05 45 70 72 00* ***Rooms*** *20*

Napoléon's wife, Joséphine de Beauharnais, lived in this distinguished 17th-century château set in a park. Its stately interior is on a monumental scale with a sweeping staircase, elegant mirrored and chandeliered salons, and huge, high-ceilinged rooms. **www.chateausaintecatherine.fr**

NIEUIL Château de Nieuil P 🍴 ≋ 🧒 ☰ €€€

16270 ***Tel*** *05 45 71 36 38* ***Fax*** *05 45 71 46 45* ***Rooms*** *14*

King François I hunted in the extensive park surrounding this superb Renaissance château with its pepper-pot towers and sweeping staircase. A quiet night is assured in the elegant, comfortable rooms. The stables now house an excellent restaurant. **www.chateaunieuilhotel.com**

POITIERS Château du Clos de la Ribaudière 🍴 ≋ €€

Chasseneuil Center, Chasseneuil du Poitou, 86360 ***Tel*** *05 49 52 86 66* ***Fax*** *05 49 52 86 32* ***Rooms*** *39*

Close to Poitiers, this magnificent hotel and restaurant is housed in a château dating back to the 18th century. The bedrooms are spacious and sophisticated. Special-price breaks are available for two people including a night's stay, meals, and either a game of golf or a visit to nearby Futurscope. **www.ribaudiere.com**

ROCHEFORT-SUR-MER La Corderie Royale P 🍴 ≋ 🍸 ▤ €€€

Rue Audebert, 17300 ***Tel*** *05 46 99 35 35* ***Fax*** *05 46 99 78 72* ***Rooms*** *50*

The best place to stay in Rochefort, both for comfort and convenience, this hotel-restaurant stands on the leafy banks of the River Charente between the yacht harbor and the royal rope-making factory (after which the hotel is named). The restaurant is a good place for lunch. **www.corderieroyale.com**

ROYAN Domaine de St Palais P €€

50 rue du Logis, St Palais sur Mer, 17420 ***Tel*** *05 46 39 85 26* ***Fax*** *04 46 39 85 57* ***Rooms*** *4*

This elegant haven is discreetly set back from the bustling coast near Royan. It occupies a building that is largely 18th century but has a history dating back even earlier. Two of the stylish rooms overlook the garden and two look toward woods. There are also eight apartments and one suite. **www.domainedesaintpalais.eu**

SABRES Auberge des Pins P 🍴 🚸 €€€

Rte de la Piscine, 40630 ***Tel*** *05 58 08 30 00* ***Fax*** *05 58 07 56 74* ***Rooms*** *25*

From the moment you enter this attractive farmhouse, deep in the forests of the Landes Regional Park, you know you're in for a treat. This is country living at its best: old-style hospitality, homely rooms, open fires in winter, and quiet corners to curl up in with a book. Fine restaurant. **www.aubergedespins.fr**

SEIGNOSSE La Villa de l'Etang Blanc P 🍴 €€

2265 rte de l'Etang Blanc, 40510 ***Tel*** *05 58 72 80 15* ***Fax*** *05 58 72 83 67* ***Rooms*** *10*

This charming hotel is set in a park with direct access to the Etang Blanc. The elegant rooms are individually decorated in a romantic style. There's a good restaurant with a wonderful view of the lake. It serves traditional seasonal dishes with discreet, professional service. Closed mid-Nov–Apr. **www.letangblanc.com**

ST-EMILION Au Logis des Remparts P ≋ ▤ €€

18 rue Guadet, 33330 ***Tel*** *05 57 24 70 43* ***Fax*** *05 57 74 47 44* ***Rooms*** *17*

Outside peak season, when prices drop, this modest hotel provides a comfortable overnight stop. Its main draws are the sizeable terraced garden and swimming pool. The rooms lack character, but those on the back benefit from views over the vineyards. **www.logisdesremparts.com**

ST-EMILION Hostellerie de Plaisance ⇅ P 🍴 ▤ €€€€€

Pl du Clocher, 33330 ***Tel*** *05 57 55 07 55* ***Fax*** *05 57 74 41 11* ***Rooms*** *17 (plus 4 suites)*

Upscale hotel in an exceptional location overlooking St-Emilion and its famous vineyards. Luxurious rooms boast the full range of amenities, including magnificent bathrooms. Some have private terraces. The service is top-notch and the restaurant one of the region's best. **www.hostelleriedeplaisance.com**

ST-LOUP-LAMAIRE Château de St Loup sur Thouet – The Keep P €€€€

Château de St-Loup, 79600 ***Tel*** *05 49 64 81 73* ***Fax*** *05 49 64 82 06* ***Rooms*** *13*

This moated medieval château is owned by a count. The keep houses bed and breakfast rooms, many with four-poster beds; the best is the Suite of the Black Prince. There are other stately rooms in the main château, which is open to visitors during the day. The extensive grounds include parkland and an orangery. **www.chateaudesaint-loup.com**

ST-SEURIN-D'UZET Blue Sturgeon P 🍴 ≋ €€

3 rue de la Cave, 17120 ***Tel*** *05 46 74 17 18* ***Rooms*** *5*

A calm, chic, eclectically furnished bed and breakfast in the small village of St-Seurin-d'Uzet, which is alleged to be the first place in Europe to have produced caviar in the 1920s (hence the hotel's name). Good beaches nearby and the famous vineyards of the Médoc are just across the Gironde estuary. Dinner is served on request. **www.bluesturgeon.com**

TRIZAY Les Jardins du Lac P 🍴 ≋ 🚸 €€

Lac du Bois Fleuri, 17250 ***Tel*** *05 46 82 03 56* ***Fax*** *05 46 82 03 55* ***Rooms*** *8*

A well-run hotel midway between Rochefort and Saintes. The modern buildings are surrounded by landscaped gardens with a trout lake and woodland. Airy and well-maintained rooms all offer lake views. Meals are served outside in fine weather. A lovely, relaxing place to stay. **www.jardins-du-lac.com**

PERIGORD, QUERCY & GASCONY

AGEN Hôtel Château des Jacobins P ▤ €€

1 pl des Jacobins, 47000 ***Tel*** *05 53 47 03 31* ***Fax*** *05 53 47 02 80* ***Rooms*** *15*

Built in the early 19th century, this small, ivy-clad château with a walled garden is an oasis of calm in the city center. The rooms are elegantly decorated with period furniture and chandeliers. There's secure parking and you'll find plenty of fine restaurants within easy walking distance. **www.chateau-des-jacobins.com**

Key to Price Guide *see p550* **Key to Symbols** *see back cover flap*

ALBI La Regence George V €

27–29 av Maréchal Joffre, 81000 ***Tel*** *05 63 54 24 16* ***Fax*** *05 63 49 90 78* ***Rooms*** *20*

This comfortable, inexpensive hotel near the train station and not far from the city center offers a choice of standard rooms or larger junior suites. All are decorated in warm and bright colors. Outside there is a terrace and a small garden. Breakfast only but there are plenty of restaurants nearby. **www.laregence-georgev.fr**

ALBI Hostellerie du Grand St Antoine ⇅ P 🍴 ≋ ▤ €€€€

17 rue St-Antoine, 81000 ***Tel*** *05 63 54 04 04* ***Fax*** *05 63 47 10 47* ***Rooms*** *44*

Owned by the same family for five generations, the Grand St Antoine claims to be one of the oldest hotels in France. Guests have the use of a swimming pool and a tennis court 2-miles (3-km) away. Parking is available for an extra charge. The restaurant serves traditional southwestern cuisine. **www.hotel-saint-antoine-albi.com**

BEYNAC-ET-CAZENAC Café de la Rivière ▤ €

Bourg, 24220 ***Tel*** *05 53 28 35 49* ***Rooms*** *3*

This renowned restaurant situated above the River Dordogne has three simple bed and breakfast rooms. There is one double and two twins; all have wooden floors, white linen bedspreads, and en-suite bathrooms. Free WiFi Internet access is also available. Closed Nov–Mar. **www.cafedelariviere.com**

BOURDEILLES Hostellerie Les Griffons 🍴 €€

24310 ***Tel*** *05 53 45 45 35* ***Fax*** *05 53 45 45 20* ***Rooms*** *10*

All of the rooms in this 16th-century mansion have plenty of character, with exposed beams and vividly colored paints and fabrics. Some rooms are in the attic and others have views over the river. The restaurant serves dinner plus Sunday lunch. Closed Nov–Mar. **www.griffons.fr**

BRANTOME Le Moulin de l'Abbaye P 🍴 🚸 ▤ €€€€

1 rte de Bourdeilles, 24310 ***Tel*** *05 53 05 80 22* ***Fax*** *05 53 05 75 27* ***Rooms*** *19*

Treat yourself to a night of luxury in this romantic, creeper-covered mill on the River Dronne. Rooms are in the mill and in two handsome old houses nearby, but all share the same fresh yet sophisticated decor. Terraced waterside gardens proivde the perfect breakfast spot. Closed mid-Nov–Apr. **www.moulinabbaye.com**

CHAMPAGNAC-DE-BELAIR Le Moulin du Roc P 🍴 ≋ 🏋 €€€€

Av Eugène le Roy, 24530 ***Tel*** *05 53 02 86 00* ***Fax*** *05 53 54 21 31* ***Rooms*** *13*

In a magical setting on the river Dronne, just outside Brantôme, is this luxury hotel hidden under swathes of greenery in a converted 17th-century watermill. In addition to the sumptuous, individually styled rooms, there is a superb restaurant, an indoor pool, and tennis court. Closed Oct–May. **www.moulinduroc.com**

CHANCELADE Château des Reynats ⇅ P 🍴 ≋ €€

Av des Reynats, 24650 ***Tel*** *05 53 03 53 59* ***Fax*** *05 53 03 44 84* ***Rooms*** *50*

Just west of Périgueux, this charming 19th-century château makes for an agreeable night's stay. Standard rooms in the "Orangerie" annex are bright and breezy, but for real atmosphere upgrade to the château rooms. There's a top-notch resturant, too, and spacious grounds. **www.chateau-hotel-perigord.com**

COLY Manoir d'Hautegente P 🍴 ≋ €€€

Haute Gente, 24120 ***Tel*** *05 53 51 68 03* ***Fax*** *05 53 50 38 52* ***Rooms*** *17*

Not far from Sarlat and the Lascaux caves is this picturesque manor house, once the mill and forge of an abbey. It is now a family-run, friendly hotel with log fires, private fishing, and well-tended riverside gardens. Half-board mandatory in high-season; the food is excellent. Closed Nov–Feb. **www.manoir-hautegente.com**

CONDOM Le Logis des Cordeliers P ≋ €

Rue de la Paix, 32100 ***Tel*** *05 62 28 03 68* ***Fax*** *05 62 68 29 03* ***Rooms*** *21*

Modern hotel offering modest but well priced rooms in the center of Condom. Picture windows lend space and light and many rooms have balconies overlooking the pool. There is no in-house restaurant, but you can eat in the highly rated Table des Cordeliers next door. Closed Jan. **www.logisdescordeliers.com**

CORDES SUR CIEL Le Grand Ecuyer P 🍴 ▤ €€€

Grand Rue Raymond VII, 81170 ***Tel*** *05 63 53 79 50* ***Fax*** *05 63 53 79 51* ***Rooms*** *13*

This former hunting lodge of the Counts of Toulouse has long been popular with notables such as de Gaulle and François Mitterand. Gothic touches abound, from the sculpted façade to stone flags, huge fireplaces, antique furniture, and plush upholstery. Renowned restaurant. Closed Nov–Easter. **www.legrandecuyer.com**

CUQ-TOULZA Cuq en Terrasses 🍴 ≋ €€€€

Cuq le Château, 81470 ***Tel*** *05 63 82 54 00* ***Fax*** *05 63 82 54 11* ***Rooms*** *7*

A renovated 18th-century hilltop house in the Cocagne region, midway between Toulouse and Castres. The rooms have overhead beams and varnished flagstone floors. Nestling in the lovely gardens is an inviting pool. The restaurant menu draws on the produce of local farms. **www.cuqenterrasses.com**

DOMME L'Esplanade P 🍴 ▤ €€

Rue du Pont Carrel, 24250 ***Tel*** *05 53 28 31 41* ***Fax*** *05 53 28 49 92* ***Rooms*** *15*

Perched on the edge of a cliff, the best rooms in this elegant hotel offer panoramic views of the Dordogne valley. Some have canopied four-poster beds to match the refined, opulent decor. Less dramatic but very comfortable rooms are among the streets of the medieval bastide. Closed mid-Nov–Mar. **www.esplanade-perigord.com**

FIGEAC Château du Vigier du Roy

⇅ P 🍴 ≋ €€€€

52 rue Emile Zola, 46100 ***Tel*** *05 65 50 05 05* ***Fax*** *05 65 50 06 06* ***Rooms*** *9*

Centuries ago, this mansion with its 14th-century tower was once the residence of a judge, the King's representative in Figeac. The rooms all have a medieval flavor, with four-poster or canopied beds. The restaurant is in the former guards' room. **www.chateau-viguier-figeac.com**

GOUDOURVILLE Château de Goudourville

P ≋ €€€

82400 ***Tel*** *05 63 29 09 06* ***Fax*** *05 63 39 7 5 22* ***Rooms*** *6*

This château betweeen Agen and Moissac dates back to the 11th century and the guest rooms are redolent with history. The rooms – some of them enormous – are decorated with 18th-century furniture and tapestries and have views over the valley, the village, or the battlements. **www.chateau-goudourville.fr**

LACAVE Le Pont de l'Ouysse

P 🍴 ≋ ▤ €€€€

Le Pont de l'Ouysse, 46200 ***Tel*** *05 65 37 87 04* ***Fax*** *05 65 32 77 41* ***Rooms*** *13*

There's a Provençal air to this chic restaurant-with-rooms in riverside gardens not far from Rocamadour. Inside, cool creams blend with ocher hues, and the rooms and two apartments are fabulously quiet. In their fourth generation, the Chambon family has created a real hideaway. Inventive cuisine. **www.lepontdelouysse.fr**

LE BUGUE SUR VEZERE Domaine de la Barde

⇅ P 🍴 ≋ 🍸 ♿ €€€€

Route de Périgeux, 24260 ***Tel*** *05 53 07 16 54* ***Fax*** *05 53 54 76 19* ***Rooms*** *18*

Elegant guest rooms are housed within an 18th-century manor house (9 rooms), an old mill (8 rooms), and the forge (one room). The large grounds include classical gardens and a jet-stream swimming pool. If you want to get away from it all, there are riverside paths and meadow walks nearby. **www.domainedelabarde.com**

LECTOURE Hôtel de Bastard

P 🍴 ≋ €

Rue Lagrange, 32700 ***Tel*** *05 62 68 82 44* ***Fax*** *05 62 68 76 81* ***Rooms*** *31*

Despite its name, this elegant hotel is one of the best in the Gers. Antique furnishings are coupled with modern comforts in an 18th-century townhouse. Facilities include a small garden, sun deck, and swimming pool. Refined regional cuisine makes the restaurant perennially popular. Closed Jan. **www.hotel-de-bastard.com**

LES-EYZIES-DE-TAYAC Les Glycines

P 🍴 ≋ ▤ €€

24620 ***Tel*** *05 53 06 97 07* ***Fax*** *05 53 06 92 19* ***Rooms*** *24*

A charming and luxurious small hotel in Périgord Noir, which is particularly convenient for visiting the prehistoric painted caves nearby. The best rooms (junior suites) have their own private terraces and direct access to the garden. A choice of picnics can be ordered from the reception desk. **www.les-glycines-dordogne.com**

MARTEL Relais Ste-Anne

P ≋ ▤ €€

Rue du Pourtanel, 46600 ***Tel*** *05 65 37 40 56* ***Fax*** *05 65 37 42 82* ***Rooms*** *21*

Behind the discreet entrance hides a lovely old building, once a girls' boarding school complete with chapel, in spacious grounds. Everything is designed for a relaxing stay, from the beautifully appointed rooms – some with private terrace – to the heated pool. Hearty breakfasts. Closed mid-Nov–Mar. **www.relais-sainte-anne.com**

MAUROUX Hostellerie Le Vert

P 🍴 ≋ €€

46700 ***Tel*** *05 65 36 51 36* ***Fax*** *05 65 36 56 84* ***Rooms*** *6*

Ancient cedar trees shade the grounds of this 17th-century house, part of a former wine estate at the heart of the Cahors wine region. The rooms are spacious and exposed stone walls give them great character. Reserve for dinner in the cool dining room or on the flower-filled terrace. Closed Nov–Mar. **www.hotellevert.com**

MERCUES Château de Mercuès

⇅ P 🍴 ≋ 🏃 🍸 €€€€

46090 ***Tel*** *05 65 20 00 01* ***Fax*** *05 65 20 05 72* ***Rooms*** *30*

Dominating the Lot valley is this turreted 13th-century château where the bishops of nearby Cahors once lived. It is now a luxury hotel offering rooms on a suitably grand scale, gourmet dining among chandeliers or in the courtyard, tennis courts, and extensive parkland. **www.chateaudemercues.com**

MOISSAC Le Moulin de Moissac

⇅ P 🍴 ▤ €€

Esplanade du Moulin, 82200 ***Tel*** *05 63 32 88 88* ***Fax*** *05 63 32 02 08* ***Rooms*** *36*

Though not the most attractive building, this hotel in a former mill more than compensates with its quiet, riverside location, efficient service, and well-equipped rooms. All come with DVD/CD player, WiFi Internet, and coffee machine. Central Moissac is a stroll away. **www.lemoulindemoissac.com**

MONESTIES Le Manoir de Raynaudes

P 🍴 ≋ €€€€

81640 ***Tel*** *05 63 36 91 90* ***Fax*** *05 63 36 92 09* ***Rooms*** *5*

Peace is guaranteed in this 19th-century manor house on the edge of a hamlet surrounded by lush meadows. There are luxurious rooms in the main house, or if you want more space and privacy, choose one of the apartments in the converted barn. Well-located for visiting Cordes, Albi, and the rest of the Tarn. **www.raynaudes.com**

MONTCUQ EN QUERCY Domaine de St Géry

€€€€

46800 ***Tel*** *05 65 31 82 51* ***Fax*** *05 65 22 92 89* ***Rooms***

The carefully maintained grounds of this hotel yield costly truffles, which have pride of place on the dining room menu. All the rooms are different, the most unusual is a vaulted cellar with two terraces. The others have either a private terrace or direct access to the garden. **www.saint-gery.com**

Key to Price Guide *see p550* **Key to Symbols** *see back cover flap*

NONTRON La Maison des Beaux Arts P ≋ €€

7 av du Général Leclerc, 24300 ***Tel*** *05 53 56 39 77* ***Rooms*** *5*

The "House of Fine Arts" is a restored 19th-century townhouse in pleasant Nontron. Inside, it is light and brightly decorated and there are magnificent views from the windows. Drawing and painting courses are sometimes held here. There is also a self-contained apartment available for rent. **www.la-maison-des-beaux-arts.com**

ROCAMADOUR Domaine de la Rhue P ≋ €€

46500 ***Tel*** *05 65 33 71 50* ***Fax*** *05 65 33 72 48* ***Rooms*** *14*

A short drive from Rocamadour is this peaceful hotel in beautifully converted 19th-century stables. Exposed beams and stonework give the spacious rooms an upscale rustic charm. Some come with a terrace, others with a kitchenette. The nearest restaurants are in Rocamadour. **www.domainedelarhue.com**

SARLAT Le Moulin Pointu 🍴 ≋ €

Ste Nathalene, 24200 ***Tel*** *05 53 28 15 54* ***Fax*** *05 53 28 15 54* ***Rooms*** *5*

Conveniently located on the outskirts of Sarlat, this bed and breakfast has cozy rooms with direct access to the garden, which has a pond and a small river. Breakfast can be enjoyed on the terrace near the swimming pool. Dinner (available on request) is shared with the family and other guests. **www.moulinpointu.com**

SEGUENVILLE Château de Seguenville €€

Cabanac Seguenville, 31480 ***Tel*** *05 62 13 42 67* ***Fax*** *05 62 13 42 68* ***Rooms*** *5*

Perched on a hill near Toulouse, this château has great views of the surrounding countryside. A monumental staircase leads to the bedrooms, which are decorated with warm and bright colors; some have antique baths and sinks. The panoramic terrace doubles as a dining room for breakfast and dinner in summer. **www.chateau-de-seguenville.com**

ST-AFFRIQUE-LES-MONTAGNES Domaine de Rasigous P 🍴 ≋ €€

Domaine de Rasigous, 81290 ***Tel*** *05 63 73 30 50* ***Rooms*** *8*

This genteel estate offers a peaceful spot within easy reach of Albi, Castres, Toulouse, and Carcassonne. Three of the spacious rooms are suites and there is a large warm lounge where you can enjoy tea by the fireside. Outside, the park is shaded by ancient trees. Free bike rental is available. Closed mid–Nov–mid–Mar. **www.domainederasigous.com**

ST-CIRQ-LAPOPIE Le Château de St-Cirq Lapopie ≋ €€€

Le Bourg, 46330 ***Tel*** *05 65 31 27 48* ***Rooms*** *5*

An exquisitely restored château in the middle of one of the prettiest villages in France. The most original feature is the heated indoor swimming pool carved out of the rock on which the village stands. Rooms are beautifully decorated. Meals are not available. Closed Oct–May. **www.chateaudesaintcirqlapopie.com**

ST-VIVIEN Auberge du Moulin de Labique P 🍴 ≋ €€€

St Eutrope de Born, Villeréal, 47210 ***Tel*** *05 53 01 63 90* ***Fax*** *05 53 01 73 17* ***Rooms*** *6*

This welcoming 18th-century country residence is decorated with antique furniture, paintings, and patterned wallpaper. Enjoy breakfast or a glass of local wine on the terrace while listening to the babbling mill stream. The excellent dinners are created with home-grown food and local produce. **www.moulin-de-labique.fr**

TEYSSODE Domaine d'en Naudet P ≋ 🏋 €€

81220 ***Tel*** *05 63 70 50 59* ***Rooms*** *4*

One singular room here is in a converted watchtower; the others are in the old barn and stables facing south over the garden and a nearby Roman road. Breakfast can be enjoyed on the upper terrace with views of the countryside. There are tennis courts and a golf course nearby. WiFi Internet access is also available. **www.domainenaudet.com**

TOULOUSE Les Loges de St Sernin ⇅ ≡ €€

12 rue St Bernard, 31000 ***Tel*** *05 61 24 44 44* ***Rooms*** *4*

This renovated private city house with guest bedrooms on the upper floors offers superb comfort. On a street near Toulouse's principal monument, Basilique St-Sernin, and within easy walking distance from the main square, it could not be more conveniently located. The owner is welcoming and obliging. **www.logessaintsernin.fr**

TOULOUSE Hôtel des Beaux Arts ⇅ P 🍴 ≡ €€€€

1 pl du Pont Neuf, 31000 ***Tel*** *05 34 45 42 42* ***Fax*** *05 34 45 42 43* ***Rooms*** *20*

Behind a beautiful Belle Epoque façade, beside the Pont Neuf, lies a chic hotel with modern comforts. The less expensive rooms are on the small side – better to upgrade for river views and more space. For a special occasion, opt for room 42 with its own tiny terrace among the roof tiles. **www.hoteldesbeauxarts.com**

THE PYRENEES

AINHOA Ithurria P 🍴 ≋ ≡ €€€

Pl du Fronton, 64250 ***Tel*** *05 59 29 92 11* ***Fax*** *05 59 29 81 28* ***Rooms*** *28*

This pretty 17th-century Basque inn was a stop on the pilgrimage route to Compostela. Opposite is the village's *pelota* court. Rooms are comfortable and prettily decorated, and the cozy dining room has an open fireplace, oak beams, and a menu with local specialties. Closed Dec–mid-Apr. **www.ithurria.com**

ANGLET Château de Brindos P 🍴 ≋ 🏋 ▤ €€€€€

1 allée du Château, 64600 ***Tel*** *05 59 23 89 80* ***Fax*** *05 59 23 89 81* ***Rooms*** *29*

Set in extensive, wooded grounds, this luxurious country house hotel offers gracious living beside a peaceful lake. Modern facilities include a weight room, sauna, and *hammam*, with the beach and a golf course a short drive away. Enjoy breakfast on the jetty over the lake. **www.chateaudebrindos.com**

ARBONNE Laminak P ≋ €€

Route de St Pée, 64210 ***Tel*** *05 59 41 95 40* ***Fax*** *05 59 41 87 65* ***Rooms*** *12*

A cozy hotel in a big, beautifully furnished Basque house with countryside and mountain views from the windows. Three of the rooms have private terraces, and outside there is a large garden. Light evening meals are available on request. Within reach of eight golf courses. **www.hotel-laminak.com**

ARGELES GAZOST Hôtel le Miramont ⇅ P 🍴 ▤ €€€

44 av des Pyrénées, 65400 ***Tel*** *05 62 97 01 26* ***Fax*** *05 62 97 56 67* ***Rooms*** *27*

This stylish hotel harking back to the 1930s is set amid manicured gardens in an attractive spa town. Eight rooms, furnished with antiques, are in a separate villa in the gardens, sharing the facilities of the main wing. Chef Pierre Pucheu serves Atlantic-Pyrenees delicacies. **www.hotelmiramont.com**

ARREAU Hôtel d'Angleterre ⇅ P 🍴 ≋ 🚸 €€

Rte Luchon, 65240 ***Tel*** *05 62 98 63 30* ***Fax*** *05 62 98 69 66* ***Rooms*** *17*

This 17th-century inn, set in a pretty village of slate-roofed houses in the foothills of the Pyrenees, offers a good restaurant, plainly furnished but comfortable rooms, a garden, swimming pool, terrace, and children's games area. A great base for exploring the stunning countryside. **www.hotel-angleterre-arreau.com**

AURIGNAC Le Moulin P €

Samouillan, 31420 ***Tel*** *05 61 98 86 92* ***Rooms*** *2*

A restored mill in a quiet tributary valley of the Garonne. Choose your room by theme: Zen, elephants, or French country house. There is a minimum two-night stay and discounts are available for longer stays. Meditation and other spiritual workshops are often held here, or you can relax in the large garden. **www.moulin-vert.net**

BEAUCENS Eth Berye Petit ✎ P 🚸 €

15 route de Vielle, 65400 ***Tel*** *05 62 97 90 02* ***Rooms*** *3*

Family-run bed and breakfast in an 18th-century farmhouse situated in a quiet hamlet south of Lourdes. Two of the rooms are cozy spaces in the attic; the third room is larger and has its own balcony with mountain views. *Table d'hôte* dinner on Friday and Saturday evenings by prior arrangement. **www.beryepetit.com**

BIARRITZ Villa Le Goëland €€€€

12 plateau d'Atalaye, 64200 ***Tel*** *05 59 24 25 76* ***Rooms*** *4*

This grand old villa is close to both the town center and the beach. There are magnificent views over the Port Vieux, the Rocher de la Vierge and the distant coast of Spain. One room has its own large private terrace. Because it is a family home, no meals are available but it's only a short walk to the restaurants of Biarritz. **www.villagoeland.com**

BIARRITZ Hôtel du Palais P 🍴 ≋ 🚸 🏋 ▤ €€€€€

1 av de l'Impératrice, 64200 ***Tel*** *05 59 41 64 00* ***Fax*** *05 59 41 67 99* ***Rooms*** *132*

The grande dame of Biarritz's hotel scene, with an ambience harking back to the resort's Belle Epoque heyday. A magnificent heated seawater pool, direct beach access, a putting green, a playground, and kids' pool complement the lovely rooms and outstanding restaurants. **www.hotel-du-palais.com**

CAMON Château de Camon P 🍴 ≋ €€€

Camon, 9500 ***Tel*** *05 61 60 31 23* ***Rooms*** *7*

This massive abbey, dating back to the 10th century, dominates a pretty fortified village within easy reach of Mirepoix and Montségur. Classically French rooms are sumptuous and spacious. The restaurant (dinner only) draws on local and seasonal ingredients. In summer, tables are set out in the abbey cloister. Closed Nov–Feb. **www.chateaudecamon.com**

ESPELETTE Hôtel Euskadi P 🍴 ≋ 🏋 €

285 rte Karrika Nagusia, 64250 ***Tel*** *05 59 93 91 88* ***Fax*** *05 59 93 90 19* ***Rooms*** *27*

Set in quiet countryside not far from the Atlantic beaches, this small and friendly family-run hotel has a pretty terrace, well-appointed rooms, a large swimming pool, tennis courts, and secure parking. Owners Michèle and André Darriadou's restaurant serves Basque-influenced dishes. **www.hotel-restaurant-euskadi.com**

ISSOR Les 3 Baudets ✎ P ≋ €

64570 ***Tel*** *05 59 34 41 98* ***Rooms*** *5*

An 18th-century former farmhouse in a peaceful location surrounded by woods and meadows between Arette and Oloron-Ste-Marie. A good base from which to explore the central-western Pyrenees. It has five spacious rooms and a restaurant in the old sheep barn where grilled meats and homemade desserts are served. **www.3baudets-pyrenees.com**

LASSEUBE Maison Rancésamy P 🍴 €

Quartier Rey, 64290 ***Tel*** *05 59 04 26 37* ***Rooms*** *5*

This delightful rural retreat in the undulating countryside northwest of Oloron-Ste-Marie is run by charming and hospitable owners. The rooms are cozy and meals (*table d'hôte* dinner only) are exquisitely prepared. A place to unwind and enjoy the peace, or to use as a base while exploring the Pyrenees. **www.missbrowne.free.fr**

LOUHOSSOA Domaine de Silencenia P 🍴 ≋ 🍸 €€

64250 ***Tel*** *05 59 93 35 60* ***Rooms*** *5*

Just off the road between St-Jean-Pied-de-Port and Cambo-les-Bains lies this bed and breakfast in its own grounds with a swimming pool and small lake. The cozy bedrooms are individually decorated and equipped with four-poster beds. Breakfast and an excellent *table d'hôte* dinner are available. **www.domaine-silencenia.com**

LOURDES Grand Hôtel de la Grotte ⇅ P 🍴 ▤ €€

66 rue de la Grotte, 65100 ***Tel*** *05 62 94 58 87* ***Fax*** *05 62 93 20 50* ***Rooms*** *83*

One of the grandest hotels in the historic pilgrimage town of Lourdes, close to the famous grotto and fortress, with large rooms furnished opulently in Louis XVI style – some with views of the cathedral. The restaurants offer a choice of buffet or brasserie dining. Closed Nov–mid-Mar. **www.hotel-grotte.com**

MAUBOURGUET La Maison at Maubourguet 🌿 ≋ €

40 rue de l'hotel de ville, 65700 ***Tel*** *05 62 31 71 19* ***Fax*** *05 62 31 71 19* ***Rooms*** *3*

This small English-run bed and breakfast in an untouristy town north of Tarbes is an ideal base for exploring western Gascony. The owners couldn't be more welcoming and obliging. The rooms are decorated with warmth and charm. Private, secluded garden with swimming pool. Parking in the square nearby. **www.maisonatmaubourguet.com**

MIREPOIX La Maison des Consuls €€

6 pl Maréchal Leclerc, 09500 ***Tel*** *05 61 68 81 81* ***Fax*** *05 61 68 81 15* ***Rooms*** *8*

Housed in a charming 14th-century building that was once the district's courtroom, this hotel is located on a renowned medieval square in the heart of this picturesque little town. The rooms are filled with an eclectic array of antiques. The café-bar serves breakfast and snacks. **www.maisondesconsuls.com**

MONEIN Maison Canterou P ≋ €

Quartier Laquidée, 64360 ***Tel*** *05 59 21 41 38* ***Rooms*** *5*

A traditional farmhouse with inner courtyard on a wine estate producing Jurançon wines, sitting on the rolling Béarn hills. All the rooms are prettily decorated. "Palombière" under the eaves is spacious, while "Mansengou" has a balcony opening out to face the Pyrenees. "Cupidon" is for romantics. *Table d'hôte* is available on request.

ORTHEZ Reine Jeanne P 🍴 🚸 €

44 rue Bourg Vieux, 64300 ***Tel*** *05 59 67 00 76* ***Fax*** *05 59 69 09 63* ***Rooms*** *30*

Occupying an 18th-century building in this historic Béarnaise town straddling the Gave de Pau river, this pleasant hotel has small guest rooms around a sheltered courtyard, as well as a modern wing with larger rooms. Country-style restaurant with traditional cooking. **www.reine-jeanne.fr**

PAU Bristol P ▤ €€

3 rue Gambetta, 64000 ***Tel*** *05 59 27 72 98* ***Fax*** *05 59 27 87 80* ***Rooms*** *24*

This long standing hotel (founded in 1903) is centrally located making it ideal for exploring Pau on foot. The rooms are tastefully decorated and varied, some have a balcony while others have a view of the Pyrenees. The bathrooms are equipped with large baths and showers. Free WiFi is available. **www.hotelbristol-pau.com**

PAU Hôtel du Parc Beaumont P 🍴 ≋ ▤ €€€€€

1 av Edouard VII, 64000 ***Tel*** *05 59 11 84 00* ***Fax*** *05 59 11 85 00* ***Rooms*** *80*

This luxurious modern hotel, part of the Concorde group, stands in beautiful grounds next to Pau's casino and palm-lined boulevard with great views of the Pyrenees. Rooms are lavishly furnished, and there is a heated pool, whirlpool, sauna, and *hammam* (Turkish bath). **www.hotel-parc-beaumont.com**

SARE Hôtel Arraya P 🍴 €€

Pl du Village, 64310 ***Tel*** *05 59 54 20 46* ***Fax*** *05 59 54 27 04* ***Rooms*** *20*

Modern facilities blend with old-world character at this half-timbered hotel on the pilgrimage route to Compostela. Whitewashed stone walls are half-covered in foliage, bedrooms are rustic and decorated in Basque colors, and the restaurant serves regional specialties. Closed Nov–Mar. **www.arraya.com**

SARE Ttakoinenborda 🌿 P 🍴 €

Maison Ttakoinenborda, 64310 ***Tel*** *05 59 47 51 42* ***Rooms*** *4*

A traditional 17th-century farmhouse near the beautiful town of Sare, surrounded by fields and woods. *Table d'hôte* dinner includes Basque specialties and homemade bread. A useful base from which to explore the inland Basque Country and the coast or to hop over the border into Spain. **www.ttakoinenborda.ifrance.com**

SAUVETERRE DE BEARN La Maison de Navarre P 🍴 🚸 ≋ €

Quartier St Marc, 64390 ***Tel*** *05 59 38 55 28* ***Fax*** *05 59 38 55 71* ***Rooms*** *7*

This pink mansion house in a beautiful medieval village has bright, airy guest rooms. Comfortable, good value for money, and child friendly. The family donkey, Zebulon, lives in the garden. The beaches of the Atlantic coast are not too far away. Excellent restaurant. Closed Nov. **www.lamaisondenavarre.com**

ST-ETIENNE DE BAÏGORRY Hôtel Arcé P 🍴 ≋ 🍸 €€€

Rte Col d'Ispeguy, 64430 ***Tel*** *05 59 37 40 14* ***Fax*** *05 59 37 40 27* ***Rooms*** *20*

This welcoming Basque inn is set in the Aldudes valley, in the foothills of the Pyrenees, ideal for exploring the Basque country. The pool is on the opposite bank of the river, along with a tennis court. Pleasant restaurant terrace. Renovated guest rooms. Closed mid-Nov to mid-Mar. **www.hotel-arce.com**

ST GIRONS Hôtel Eychenne

P 🍴 ≋ €€€

8 av Paul Laffont, 09200 ***Tel*** *05 61 04 04 50* ***Fax*** *05 61 96 07 20* ***Rooms*** *35*

The former coaching inn has been run by the same family for seven generations, and the light, airy bedrooms and gracious public areas are filled with antiques and heirlooms. The facilities are modern, however, and there is a pretty garden where you can lunch in the open air. **www.ariege.com/hotel-eychenne/**

ST JEAN-DE-LUZ La Devinière

P €€€

5 rue Loquin, 64500 ***Tel*** *05 59 26 05 51* ***Fax*** *05 59 51 26 38* ***Rooms*** *10*

The bedrooms in this charming 18th-century building are all different, prettily decorated and furnished with antiques, artworks, and rare books. There is a cozy lounge-library with an open fireplace and a grand piano, and a breakfast-tea room. Tiny garden. No restaurant. **www.hotel-la-deviniere.com**

ST JEAN-PIED-DE-PORT Hôtel les Pyrénées

⇅ P 🍴 ≋ 🏃 🍸 ▤ €€€

19 pl du Général-de-Gaulle, 64220 ***Tel*** *05 59 37 01 01* ***Fax*** *05 59 37 18 97* ***Rooms*** *20*

This 18th-century coaching inn stands at the French end of the Roncevaux pass, where the pilgrims' route to Santiago de Compostela crosses the Pyrenees. Immaculate rooms, health club with heated outdoor pool, and a restaurant offering both gastronomic and budget menus. **www.hotel-les-pyrenees.com**

ST-LIZIER Villa Belisama

🍴 ≋ €€

Rue Notre Dame, 09190 ***Tel*** *05 61 02 83 24* ***Rooms*** *3*

In a historic village above St-Girons lies this charming bed and breakfast in a restored house (parts of which date to the 12th century). Guest rooms are large and there is a garden, a small pool, and a library with an esoteric collection of books. Breakfast as well as *table d'hôte* dinner on request. **www.ariege.com/belisama**

LANGUEDOC-ROUSSILLON

AIGUES-MORTES Hôtel des Croisades

P 🍴 ▤ €

2 rue du Port, 30220 ***Tel*** *04 66 53 67 85* ***Fax*** *04 66 53 72 95* ***Rooms*** *15*

Just outside the ramparts, beside the canal, this appealing hotel has a pretty garden, modern and well-equipped rooms, and helpful staff. The sights of historic Aigues Mortes are a short walk away, and the wetlands and beaches of the Camargue are nearby. Parking for a fee. **www.lescroisades.fr**

AIGUES-MORTES Hôtel St Louis

P 🍴 €€

10 rue Amiral Courbet, 30220 ***Tel*** *04 66 53 72 68* ***Fax*** *04 66 53 75 92* ***Rooms*** *22*

Spacious rooms with modern comforts and a location next to the famous Constant Tower make this friendly hotel in an 18th-century building one of the better places to stay in Aigues-Mortes. Good restaurant, pretty patio, and garage parking available for a fee. Closed mid-Oct–Easter. **www.lesaintlouis.fr**

BARJAC Hôtel Le Mas du Terme

P 🍴 ≋ 🏃 ▤ €

Rte de Bagnoles sur Ceze, 30430 ***Tel*** *04 66 24 56 31* ***Fax*** *04 66 24 58 54* ***Rooms*** *23*

Set among its own vineyards and lavender fields, this sturdy old stone farmhouse-hotel in the heart of the Ardèche has plenty of character, lovely surroundings, charming bedrooms and public areas, and a fine restaurant. Activities for children include riding, ping-pong, and *boules*. **www.masduterme.com**

BEZIERS Hôtel le Champ-de-Mars

P €

17 rue de Metz, 34500 ***Tel*** *04 67 28 35 53* ***Fax*** *04 67 28 61 42* ***Rooms*** *10*

This family-run establishment offers comfortable, good-sized bedrooms. Located in a quiet side street, it is close to the sights, restaurants, and cafés of historic Béziers. Baskets filled with geraniums adorn the front, while most rooms overlook the small, flower-filled back garden. **www.hotel-champdemars.com**

BEZIERS Clos de Moussanne

P ≋ €€

Route de Pezenas, 34500 ***Tel*** *04 67 39 31 81* ***Rooms*** *4*

The imposing entrance to this *chambre d'hôtes,* sheltered by two plane trees, is at the end of a leafy alley. The sophisticated bedrooms in this former convent have parquet floors, contemporary furnishings, and modern bathrooms. The best also have a terrace overlooking the pool. *Table d'hôte* on request. **www.leclosdemaussanne.com**

BIZE-MINERVOIS La Bastide Cabezac

P 🍴 ≋ ▤ ♿ €€

18–20 Hameau Cabezac, 11120 ***Tel*** *04 68 46 66 10* ***Fax*** *04 68 46 66 29* ***Rooms*** *12*

A relaxing stay awaits at this charming bastide, which nestles among olive trees and vines. Outside there are typical ocher-colored walls and shuttered windows; inside, the rooms are modern and comfortable with warm, sunny colors and regional furniture. The restaurant is excellent, and wine tastings can be arranged. **www.la-bastide-cabezac.com**

BOUZIGUES La Côte Bleue

P 🍴 ≋ €€

Av Louis Tudesq, 34140 ***Tel*** *04 67 78 31 42* ***Fax*** *04 67 78 35 49* ***Rooms*** *31*

This modern hotel close to the charming fishing village of Meze, on the inner shore of the calm Thau lagoon, has somewhat bland rooms but fantastic sea views from the balconies. Its highly regarded restaurant specializes in plump, tasty oysters, shellfish, and crustaceans. **www.lacotebleu.fr**

BRIGNAC La Missare €

9 rue de Clermont, 34800 ***Tel*** *04 67 96 07 67* ***Rooms*** *4*

Sculptured balconies and carved stone walls contrast with the original role of this 19th-century farmhouse. The former outhouses have been converted into delightful *chambres d'hôtes*; each room individually decorated with Louis XV beds and eclectic *objets d'art* collected by the owners. **la.missare@free.fr**

CARCASSONNE Des Trois Couronnes €€

2 rue Trois Couronnes, 11000 ***Tel*** *04 68 25 36 10* ***Fax*** *04 68 25 92 92* ***Rooms*** *68*

This businesslike hotel looks across the river Aude towards the battlements of medieval Carcassonne, and its fourth-floor restaurant has unbeatable views of the floodlit ramparts at night. Very good value, with much better facilities than most local hotels in its price bracket. **www.hotel-destroiscouronnes.com**

CARCASSONNE Hôtel de la Cité €€€€€

Pl August-Pierre Pont, 11000 ***Tel*** *04 68 71 98 71* ***Fax*** *04 68 71 50 15* ***Rooms*** *53*

The finest hotel in the Languedoc-Roussillon region, with immaculate service, opulent rooms, a glorious pool, formal gardens, superb restaurants, and an unbeatable location within Carcassonne's medieval town, La Cité. Golf, canoeing, and white-water rafting are available nearby. **www.hoteldelacite.com**

CASTILLON DU GARD Le Vieux Castillon €€€€

Rue Turion Sabatier, 30210 ***Tel*** *04 66 37 61 61* ***Fax*** *04 66 37 28 17* ***Rooms*** *32*

Restored buildings in a medieval village have been converted into a stylish, discreet, and prestigious hotel with fine facilities and wonderful food. Le Vieux Castillon is part of the prestigious Relais et Châteaux consortium, living up to demanding standards. Reserve well in advance. **www.vieuxcastillon.com**

CERET La Terrasse au Soleil €€€

1500 rte de Fontfrede, 66400 ***Tel*** *04 68 87 01 94* ***Fax*** *04 68 87 39 24* ***Rooms*** *41*

This hotel is perched on the slopes above the village of Céret (where Picasso lived and worked) and has great views of Mt. Canigou and the Pyrenees. The restaurant is renowned for its regional cuisine. This is a great place for an active family, with pretty rooms and good facilities. Closed Dec–Mar. **www.terrasse-au-soleil.com**

COLLIOURE Relais des Trois Mas €€€

Rte de Port-Vendres, 66190 ***Tel*** *04 68 82 05 07* ***Fax*** *04 68 82 38 08* ***Rooms*** *23*

This lovely hotel comprises several restored old buildings in pine-shaded gardens, with superb views of the Côte du Vermeille and the port and town of Collioure. Most rooms have terraces or verandas, and all have sea views. La Balette restaurant has a fine traditional menu. **www.relaisdestroismas.com**

FERRIERES-LES-VERRERIES Mas de Baumes €

34190 ***Tel*** *04 66 80 88 80* ***Fax*** *04 66 80 88 82* ***Rooms*** *7*

This converted glassworks hides in an isolated location. Bedrooms each reveal a different theme – Barbara Cartland, Oriental, or 18th century – with contemporary decor that blends elegantly with the ancient stone building. Refined, yet relaxed ambience. Original cuisine served in the restaurant. Closed Nov–Easter. **www.oustaldebaumes.com**

MOLITG-LES-BAINS Château de Riell €€€

66500 ***Tel*** *04 68 05 04 40* ***Fax*** *04 68 05 04 37* ***Rooms*** *22*

Exuberant Baroque-style château rising out of the pine trees. The interior is very contemporary with stone floors, ocher tones, and a flamboyant jungle-lounge. Stylish, comfortable rooms, some located in maisonettes in the park. Generous, creative cuisine is served in the *bodega*-type restaurant. Closed Nov–Easter. **www.chateauderiell.com**

MONTPELLIER Hôtel du Palais €

3 rue Palais des Guilhem, 34000 ***Tel*** *04 67 60 47 38* ***Fax*** *04 67 60 40 23* ***Rooms*** *26*

The Hôtel du Palais is in an attractive, century-old building in the heart of the old quarter of Montpellier. Bedrooms are on the small side, but with welcoming personal touches such as fresh flowers. A good choice for a budget short break. Plenty of restaurants nearby. **www.hoteldupalais-montpellier.fr**

MONTPELLIER New Hotel du Midi €€€

22 bd Victor Hugo, 34000 ***Tel*** *04 67 92 69 61* ***Fax*** *04 67 92 73 63* ***Rooms*** *44*

A Hausmann-style building, with *belle époque* touches, situated on the bustling Place de la Comèdie. The refurbished and spacious rooms have modern amenities and are decorated in warm tones such as chocolate and caramel, raspberry, and *pistache*. Centrally located with a choice of restaurants nearby. **www.new-hotel.com**

NARBONNE Grand Hôtel du Languedoc €

22 bd Gambetta, 11100 ***Tel*** *04 68 65 14 74* ***Fax*** *04 68 65 81 48* ***Rooms*** *40*

This stylish hotel in a 19th-century building is a short walk from Narbonne's cathedral, city-center shopping, markets, and museums. The popular restaurant retains traces of its Belle Epoque elegance. Spacious rooms with high ceilings, air conditioning, and soundproofing. **www.hoteldulanguedoc.com**

NIMES Imperator-Concorde €€€

Quai de la Fontaine, 30000 ***Tel*** *04 66 21 90 30* ***Fax*** *04 66 67 70 25* ***Rooms*** *60*

Built in 1929, this hotel has been frequented by the rich and famous, including Ava Gardner and Hemingway. The well-equipped rooms, some with a 1930s decor and others more modern, overlook an enchanting garden planted with cedars and palm trees. The restaurant is recommended for its imaginative regional dishes. **www.hotel-imperator.com**

NIMES New Hôtel la Baume €€€

21 rue Nationale, 30000 ***Tel*** *04 66 76 28 42* ***Fax*** *04 66 76 28 45* ***Rooms*** *34*

Housed in an elegant 17th-century townhouse, la Baume is one of the most pleasant places to stay in Nîmes. A short step from the sights, it blends old-world charm with modern facilities. Some rooms are even listed as historic monuments. No restaurant, but a welcoming café-bar. **www.new-hotel.com**

PERPIGNAN Hôtel de la Loge €

1 rue des Fabriques d'en Nabot, 66000 ***Tel*** *04 68 34 41 02* ***Fax*** *04 68 34 25 13* ***Rooms*** *22*

This affordable hotel in the heart of Perpignan's medieval quarter is housed within the walls of a 16th-century Catalan mansion with a mosaic forecourt and fountain. Its comfortable rooms all have en-suite facilities. Unassuming and cozy, ideal for a short break. **www.hoteldelaloge.fr**

PERPIGNAN Villa Duflot €€€

Rond point Albert Donnezan, 66000 ***Tel*** *04 68 56 67 67* ***Fax*** *04 68 56 54 05* ***Rooms*** *25*

An Italian villa enclosed in its own vast park at the edge of a busy urban area. The elegant interior, bathed in light from large bay windows, has Art-Deco touches and contemporary sculptures. Well-sized, renovated rooms are chic and comfortable. The pleasant restaurant opens out onto the pool and serves regional cuisine. **www.villa-duflot.com**

PRADES Castell Rose €€

Chemin de la Litera, 66500 ***Tel*** *04 68 96 07 57* ***Rooms*** *5*

A charismatic hacienda-style *chambre d'hôtes* ideally situated for visiting the abbey of St-Martin-du-Canigou. The imposing pink marble building has a grand arcaded gallery and tower overlooking Spanish gardens and an immense park. The pleasant rooms are furnished with period furniture. Stylish and refined. **www.castellrose-prades.com**

QUILLAN Hôtel Cartier €€

31 bd Charles de Gaulle, 11500 ***Tel*** *04 68 20 05 14* ***Fax*** *04 68 20 22 57* ***Rooms*** *28*

The family-run Hôtel Cartier is housed in a 1950s Art Deco building in the center of Quillan. The clean, comfortable rooms are simple, almost Spartan, with neutral colors. The restaurant is similarly unassuming, but friendly, affordable, and as popular with locals as it is with visitors. **www.hotelcartier.com**

SAILLAGOUSE L'Atalaya €€

Llo, 66800 ***Tel*** *04 68 04 70 04* ***Fax*** *04 68 04 01 29* ***Rooms*** *13*

Clinging to a hillside in the Cerdagne region, this pretty stone auberge has a spectacular view towards Spain – which is most impressive from the edge of the pool. Comfortable, well-maintained bedrooms are individually, tastefully decorated. Quality fabrics and stylish furniture create a luxury feel. Closed Nov & Jan–Mar. **www.atalaya66.com**

SETE Grand Hôtel €

17 quai de Tassigny, 34200 ***Tel*** *04 67 74 71 77* ***Fax*** *04 67 74 29 27* ***Rooms*** *43*

Set beside Sète's famous canal, this 19th-century building exudes faded grandeur, and its conservatory-restaurant is one of the finest in Sète. Rooms are freshly decorated and well-equipped – the best have balconies overlooking the canal. Service is extremely professional. **www.legrandhotelsete.com**

SOMMIERES Hôtel de l'Orange €€

7 rue des Beaumes, 30250 ***Tel*** *04 66 77 79 94* ***Rooms*** *7*

Located in the Cévennes region, this charming *hôtel particulier* dating from the 17th century is situated on the terraces looking down to the village. Well-proportioned bedrooms vary in style, from traditional to modern with colorful furnishings. Carefully tended ornamental gardens are pleasant to stroll in. **www.hotel.delorange.free.fr**

ST CYPRIEN L'Ile de La Lagune €€€

Bd de l'Almandin, Les Capellans, 66750 ***Tel*** *04 68 21 01 02* ***Fax*** *04 68 21 06 28* ***Rooms*** *22*

One of the most luxurious hotels in the region, this building was constructed in the 1990s on an island in the middle of a lagoon. The impressive white structure, reminiscent of Spanish architecture, houses chic, airy, contemporary rooms with balconies. The excellent restaurant has a pleasant terrace. Private beach. **www.hotel-ile-lagune.com**

UZES Hostellerie Provençale €

1–3 rue Grande Bourgade, 30700 ***Tel*** *04 66 22 11 06* ***Fax*** *04 66 75 01 03* ***Rooms*** *9*

A small friendly hotel ideally situated for exploring this lovely old town, especially on market day. While the old stone building with its *tommete* tiled floors and rustic furniture recalls the past, amenities are up to date. Some rooms have Jacuzzis. The dining room is gaily decorated and serves typical Provençale fare. **www.hostellerieprovencale.com**

PROVENCE AND THE COTE D'AZUR

AIX EN PROVENCE Hôtel St Christophe €€

2 av Victor Hugo, 13100 ***Tel*** *04 42 26 01 24* ***Fax*** *04 42 38 53 17* ***Rooms*** *60*

This superb town house hotel has bedrooms with all modern facilities – reserve in advance to secure a room with a tiny balcony. Decorated in Art Deco style, the ground floor is a bustling old-fashioned brasserie of the best kind, with tables indoors and out. Very central location. **www.hotel-saintchristophe.com**

Key to Price Guide *see p550* **Key to Symbols** *see back cover flap*

AIX EN PROVENCE Hôtel des Augustins ⇅ 🚸 ≡ €€€

3 rue de la Masse, 13100 ***Tel*** *04 42 27 28 59* ***Fax*** *04 42 26 74 87* ***Rooms*** *29*

In a converted 12th-century convent, with the reception housed in a 15th-century chapel, the Hôtel des Augustins offers a haven of peace in the heart of bustling Aix. The rooms are large and comfortable in traditional Provençal style. No restaurant, but places to eat nearby. **www.hotel-augustins.com**

ANTIBES L'Auberge Provençale 🍴 🚸 €€€

61 pl Nationale, 06600 ***Tel*** *04 93 34 13 24* ***Fax*** *04 93 34 89 88* ***Rooms*** *16*

A large, welcoming townhouse under the spreading plane trees of Antibes' bustling main square. The spacious, comfortable, clean rooms are furnished simply with rustic Provençal furniture and canopied beds. Old-fashioned atmosphere in one of the Riviera's trendiest spots. **www.aubergeprovencale.com**

ANTIBES Mas Djoliba P 🍴 ≋ 🚸 ≡ €€€

29 av Provence, 06600 ***Tel*** *04 93 34 02 48* ***Fax*** *04 93 34 05 81* ***Rooms*** *13*

Mas Djoliba is a big, old-fashioned farmhouse set among lots of greenery, with palm trees surrounding the pool terrace. Convenient for old Antibes and the beaches nearby, it is perfect for a romantic weekend or a longer stay. Closed end Oct–early Feb. Half-board (which includes two meals) obligatory May–Sep. **www.hotel-djoliba.com**

ARLES Hotel de Amphithéâtre 🚸 ≡ ♿ €

5–7 rue Diderot, 16200 ***Tel*** *04 90 96 10 30* ***Fax*** *04 90 93 98 69* ***Rooms*** *28*

This bargain hotel has plenty of character and a perfect location next to Arles' amphitheater. Some of the rooms are on the small side, but the decor is charmingly Provençal. The public areas are pleasant, the service is helpful, and there is discounted parking available nearby. A good choice for families. **www.hotelamphitheatre.fr**

ARLES Hôtel Calendal P 🚸 ≡ 🍴 €€€

5 rue Porte de Laure, 13200 ***Tel*** *04 90 96 11 89* ***Fax*** *04 90 96 05 84* ***Rooms*** *38*

This relaxing hotel in the historic center of Arles, near the Roman arena, has charmingly decorated and air conditioned rooms, a few with balconies overlooking the arena or the Roman theater. Breakfast is served in the garden, which is shaded by palm trees. **www.lecalendal.com**

ARLES Hôtel d'Arlatan P ≋ ≡ ♿ €€€

26 rue du Sauvage, 13200 ***Tel*** *04 90 93 56 66* ***Fax*** *04 90 49 68 45* ***Rooms*** *47*

The former 15th-century town residence of the Comtes d'Arlatan, this is one of the most beautiful historic hotels in the region. The rooms are furnished with antiques. Glass panels in the salon floor reveal 4th-century Roman foundations. Walled garden and stone terrace. **www.hotel-arlatan.fr**

BEAULIEU SUR MER La Réserve de Beaulieu ⇅ P 🍴 ≋ 🚸 🏋 ≡ €€€€€

5 bd du Général Leclerc, 06310 ***Tel*** *04 93 01 00 01* ***Fax*** *04 93 01 28 99* ***Rooms*** *39*

A luxury hotel right on the seafront, in the heart of Beaulieu near the sailing harbor. The elegant rooms are decorated in warm pastel tones, and there is a magnificent pool next to the sea. The gastronomic restaurant has 2 Michelin stars. **www.reservebeaulieu.com**

BIOT Hôtel des Arcades 🍴 €€

16 pl des Arcades, 6410 ***Tel*** *04 93 65 01 04* ***Fax*** *04 93 65 01 05* ***Rooms*** *12*

This 15th-century inn is a quirky haven of tranquility. The rooms are small (even poky) but undeniably atmospheric. Top-floor rooms have terraces with views to the sea. The bar serves as breakfast room and restaurant, which you share with the local bohemian set and their dogs. **www.hotel-restaurant-des-arcades.com**

BORMES-LES-MIMOSAS Domaine du Mirage ⇅ P 🍴 ≋ 🚸 ≡ ♿ €€€

38 rue de la Vue des Iles, 83230 ***Tel*** *04 94 05 32 60* ***Fax*** *04 94 64 93 03* ***Rooms*** *33*

Perched above the bay of Le Lavandou and a 10-minute drive from one of the Riviera's best beaches, this Victorian-style hotel has spectacular views from its balconies and a beautiful pool. Light dishes are served by the pool at lunch, while in the evening you can choose from a short seasonal menu. Attentive staff. **www.domainedumirage.com**

CANNES La Villa Tosca ⇅ ≡ ♿ €€

11, rue Hoche, 06400 ***Tel*** *04 93 38 34 40* ***Fax*** *04 93 38 73 34* ***Rooms*** *22*

A large Beaux-Art-style hotel, ideally located for the beach, train station, and the Palais des Festivals. In the rooms, there's a mix of contemporary and antique furniture with plenty of original features. It is well worth paying a little extra for one of the larger rooms, some of which have balconies. **www.villa-tosca.com**

CANNES Hôtel Molière ⇅ ≡ €€€

5 rue Molière, 06400 ***Tel*** *04 93 38 16 16* ***Fax*** *04 93 68 29 57* ***Rooms*** *24*

This 19th-century building is very close to la Croisette, Cannes' sea-front esplananade, with bright and comfortable rooms and balconies overlooking an attractive garden where breakfast is served. Good value and very much in demand – reserve well in advance. **www.hotel-moliere.com**

CANNES Hôtel Splendid ⇅ 🚸 ≡ ♿ €€€

4 rue Felix Faure, 06400 ***Tel*** *04 97 06 22 22* ***Fax*** *04 93 99 55 02* ***Rooms*** *62*

This white wedding-cake of a hotel with its Belle Epoque façade right in the center of Cannes has fantastic views of the yacht harbor from the rooftop restaurant, and some sea-facing rooms have great balconies. Very good service, and a warm, friendly atmosphere. **www.splendid-hotel-cannes.fr**

CANNES Eden Hôtel €€€€

133 rue d'Antibes, 06400 ***Tel*** *04 93 68 78 00* ***Fax*** *04 93 68 78 01* ***Rooms*** *115*

This new boutique hotel is bright, colorful, and trendy, with a hint of 1960s retro complementing the modern feel. Close to the town's fashionable shopping streets, its facilities are enhanced with the addition of a heated pool, whirlpool, massage room, and fitness center. **www.eden-hotel-cannes.com**

CANNES Carlton Inter-Continental €€€€€

58 la Croisette, 06400 ***Tel*** *04 93 06 40 06* ***Fax*** *04 93 06 40 25* ***Rooms*** *341*

The grandest of the grand, this is where the stars come to stay. During the film festival, there is a long waiting list for reservations. Art Deco surroundings, with discreetly luxurious facilities in the rooms and public areas, and a private beach with deck chairs and sun umbrellas. **www.intercontinental.com/cannes**

CAP D'ANTIBES La Garoupe et Gardiole €€

60–74 chemin de la Garoupe, 06160 ***Tel*** *04 93 93 33 33* ***Fax*** *04 92 67 61 87* ***Rooms*** *37*

Pines and cypresses surround the pink 1920s buildings of this delightful (and delightfully affordable, by Cap d'Antibes standards) hotel. Tiled floors, beamed ceilings, and whitewashed walls perpetuate the rural image. Bedrooms are light and airy. Shady terrace and pretty pool. **www.hotel-lagaroupe-gardiole.com**

CAP D'ANTIBES La Jabotte €€

13, av Max Maurey, 06160 ***Tel*** *04 93 61 45 89* ***Fax*** *04 93 61 07 04* ***Rooms*** *10*

A small hotel with a bed-and-breakfast feel, La Jabotte is fully booked weeks ahead in summer thanks to the tastefully decorated rooms, warm welcome, and incredibly reasonable prices. A house *apéritif* is served every evening in the courtyard. The beach is just steps away. Closed Nov. **www.jabotte.com**

CAP D'ANTIBES Hôtel du Cap (Eden Roc) €€€€€

Bd Kennedy, 06600 ***Tel*** *04 93 61 39 01* ***Fax*** *04 93 67 76 04* ***Rooms*** *120*

Built in 1870, this is the ultimate Antibes palace, and a hideaway for the rich and famous. Most accommodation is in luxury suites or apartments. Seaside cabanas are available and there is a huge heated seawater pool. Superb food, obsequious service, and state-of-the-art facilities. **www.hotel-du-cap-eden-roc.com**

CASSIS Les Jardins de Cassis €€€

Rue Favier, 13260 ***Tel*** *04 42 01 84 85* ***Fax*** *04 42 01 32 38* ***Rooms*** *36*

The most pleasant place to stay in the picturesque port of Cassis, this hotel is much in demand, so reserve early. The guest rooms, in a cluster of buildings painted in pastel shades, are small but well planned. Good facilities include a Jacuzzi and a pool in a garden of lemon trees and bougainvillea. Closed Dec–Mar. **www.lesjardinsdecassis.com**

CASTELLANE Nouvel Hôtel du Commerce €€

Pl de l'Eglise, 04120 ***Tel*** *04 92 83 61 00* ***Fax*** *04 92 83 72 82* ***Rooms*** *35*

This hotel, in the picturesque small town of Castellane, makes a good base for exploring the surrounding area. The pretty, well-equipped, and immaculate rooms overlook the market square or the crag that surmounts Castellane. The dining room veranda is a lovely, airy spot. Closed Oct 15–Mar 1. **www.hotel-fradet.com**

EZE Château Eza €€€€€

Rue de la Pise, 06360 ***Tel*** *04 93 41 12 24* ***Fax*** *04 93 41 16 64* ***Rooms*** *10*

This remarkable building is a collection of medieval houses perched at the summit of Eze's "eagle's nest." Once home to Prince William of Sweden, it has been converted into a tiny jewel of a luxury hotel with elegant rooms and utterly breathtaking views from its terraces. **www.chateaueza.com**

FONTVIEILLE Hôtel La Peiriero €€

36 av des Baux, 13990 ***Tel*** *04 90 54 76 10* ***Fax*** *04 90 54 62 60* ***Rooms*** *42*

This welcoming family hotel has been created in a traditional Provençal farm, known as a *mas*. The food, the colors, and the atmosphere are all typically Provençal. In summer it is cool and relaxing and in winter warm and cozy. Children are well catered for with a specially designed play area. **www.hotel-peiriero.com**

JUAN LES PINS Hôtel des Mimosas €€€

Rue Pauline, 06160 ***Tel*** *04 93 61 04 16* ***Fax*** *04 92 93 06 46* ***Rooms*** *34*

Palm trees surround this gracious hotel, built at the turn of the 19th century and offering character and style at a reasonable rate. The hotel is beautifully presented, with comfortable, cool, simply furnished rooms. Request a quieter room overlooking the swimming pool. **www.hotelmimosas.com**

LES ARCS SUR ARGENS Logis du Guetteur €€€€

Pl du Château, 83460 ***Tel*** *04 94 99 51 10* ***Fax*** *04 94 99 51 29* ***Rooms*** *13*

Within the tower of an 11th-century castle – a prominent landmark overlooking the small village – this cozy hotel is a fine place to stay in summer or winter, almost equidistant between Mediterranean beaches and Alpine ski slopes. Views from the ramparts are epic. **www.logisduguetteur.com**

LES BAUX DE PROVENCE L'Hostellerie de la Reine Jeanne €

Grande rue, 13520 ***Tel*** *04 90 54 32 06* ***Fax*** *04 90 54 32 33* ***Rooms*** *10*

This old house in the center of one of Provence's most charming – and most-visited – villages has a dozen rooms, each different and attractively decorated and simply furnished. Not ideal for small children, and parking nearby is always a challenge. **www.la-reinejeanne.com**

LES BAUX DE PROVENCE Auberge de la Benvengudo €€€€

Vallon de l'Arcoule, 13520 ***Tel*** *04 90 54 32 54* ***Fax*** *04 90 54 42 58* ***Rooms*** *28*

With comfortable, lavishly decorated bedrooms, a large garden, and tennis court, this attractive country house near the hilltop village of Les Baux is one of the most charming places to stay on the fringes of the Bouches du Rhône. It is a good base for exploring the region. Closed Nov–Mar. **www.benvengudo.com**

MARSEILLE Sofitel Marseille Vieux Port €€€

36, bd Charles Livon, 13009 ***Tel*** *04 91 15 59 00* ***Fax*** *04 91 15 59 50* ***Rooms*** *134*

Renovated in minimalist style with dark wood and streamlined furniture, this luxury hotel is most remarkable for its spectacular views of the Vieux Port. Opt for one of the 28 rooms with terraces. The major sights are all nearby and the top-floor restaurant has panoramic views. **www.accorhotels.com**

MENTON Hôtel Aiglon €€

7 av de la Madone, 06500 ***Tel*** *04 93 57 55 55* ***Fax*** *04 93 35 92 39* ***Rooms*** *28*

Not far from the seafront, the Aiglon offers every comfort, including a heated swimming pool and a luxuriant garden. Housed in a charming 19th-century town house, it is nicely decorated and has a good restaurant with tables on a terrace shaded by palms. Closed Nov–Jan. **www.hotelaiglon.net**

MOUSTIERS STE MARIE La Bastide de Moustiers €€€€€

Chemin de Quinson, 04360 ***Tel*** *04 92 70 47 47* ***Fax*** *04 92 70 47 48* ***Rooms*** *12*

Outside one the region's prettiest villages, La Bastide de Moustiers is housed in a 17th-century building, but contains the latest facilities. Surrounded by a gorgeous garden, the hotel has sweeping views of the surrounding mountains and a good restaurant. Room with disabled access. **www.bastide-moustiers.com**

NICE Hôtel Suisse €€€

15, Quai Rauba Capéu, 06300 ***Tel*** *04 92 17 39 00* ***Fax*** *04 93 85 30 70* ***Rooms*** *42*

When it comes to value for money in Nice, it is hard to beat this sleek hotel a few steps from the food market in the cour Saleya. There is no swimming pool, but the beach is just across the street and there are balconies with views of the Baie des Anges. The staff are friendly and helpful. **www.hotel-nice-suisse.com**

NICE Hôtel Windsor €€€

11 rue Dalpozzo, 06000 ***Tel*** *04 93 88 59 35* ***Fax*** *04 93 88 94 57* ***Rooms*** *57*

The Hôtel Windsor provides a wide array of services and facilities, including a pool in an exotic palm garden, a children's play area, and a health and beauty center offering massage and a sauna. Some rooms are individually decorated by local artists. Snack bar and restaurant. **www.hotelwindsornice.com**

NICE La Pérouse €€€€

11 quai Rauba-Capeu, 06300 ***Tel*** *04 93 62 34 63* ***Fax*** *04 93 62 59 41* ***Rooms*** *65*

La Pérouse has the best view in Nice. At the eastern end of the Baie des Anges, it perches on a clifftop site between the Promenade des Anglais and the port. Sea-facing rooms have small terraces. Very peaceful. In summer the restaurant has tables beneath lemon trees. **www.hotel-la-perouse.com**

NICE Le Negresco €€€€€

37 promenade des Anglais, 06000 ***Tel*** *04 93 16 64 00* ***Fax*** *04 93 88 35 68* ***Rooms*** *150*

The Negresco is the grande dame of Riviera hotels and has been a landmark on the promenade des Anglais since it opened in 1913, with a seemingly endless list of rich and famous guests. Superbly decorated and furnished with works of art. Flawless service and modern facilities. **www.hotel-negresco-nice.com**

SEILLANS Hôtel des Deux Rocs €€

Place Font d'Amont, 83440 ***Tel*** *04 94 76 87 32* ***Fax*** *04 94 76 88 68* ***Rooms*** *13*

This 17th-century Provençal mansion on the village square has a strong family atmosphere, decorated with antiques and traditional fabrics. Rooms at the front are the biggest and brightest. Mediterranean cuisine is served beside the square's fountain in summer. **www.hoteldeuxrocs.com**

ST-JEAN-CAP-FERRAT Hôtel Brise Marine €€€€

58 av Jean-Mermoz, 06230 ***Tel*** *04 93 76 04 36* ***Fax*** *04 93 76 11 49* ***Rooms*** *16*

If you are looking for a calm place to relax, this small hotel is ideal. Facing the sea on one side and the Alpes-Maritime on the other, the views are magnificent. The lack of a swimming pool is made up for by the fact that the beach is 160-feet (50-meters) away. Closed Nov–Feb. **www.hote-brisemarine.com**

ST-JEAN-CAP-FERRAT Royal Riviera €€€€

3 av Jean Monnet, 06230 ***Tel*** *04 93 76 31 00* ***Fax*** *04 93 01 23 07* ***Rooms*** *97*

This luxury hotel in the glitzy resort of St-Jean-Cap-Ferrat has an enviable asset – its own private sandy beach. Some of the rooms seem small for the price, but service aims to satisfy every whim. The L'Orangerie, a smaller building facing the swimming pool, houses 16 pleasant rooms. **www.royal-riviera.com**

ST PAUL DE VENCE Hostellerie des Remparts €

72 rue grande, 06570 ***Tel*** *04 93 32 09 88* ***Fax*** *04 93 24 10 47* ***Rooms*** *9*

In the heart of this picturesque village, the Hostellerie des Remparts offers modern comforts in a medieval setting. Its rooms are furnished with antiques, and have marvelous views. There is a small garden terrace. The village is car-free and parking is some distance away. Closed Mondays out of season. **hostellerie-lesremparts@orange.fr**

ST PAUL DE VENCE La Colombe d'Or P 🍴 ≋ 🚸 ▤ ♿ €€€€€

Pl de Gaulle, 06570 ***Tel*** *04 93 32 80 02* ***Fax*** *04 93 32 77 78* ***Rooms*** *25*

The most luxurious place to stay in St Paul, this former farmhouse in a fabulous setting once hosted Impressionist painters, and originals by Picasso and Matisse grace its walls. The guest list is still impressive, and early reservations are necessary. The restaurant is highly rated. **www.la-colombe-dor.com**

ST TROPEZ Lou Cagnard P ▤ €€

Av Paul Roussel, 83990 ***Tel*** *04 94 97 04 24* ***Fax*** *04 94 97 09 44* ***Rooms*** *19*

Occupying an old town house, this small hotel is only a minute's walk away from St Tropez's lively square, the place des Lices. Request a room overlooking the small garden with its shady mulberry trees; there is no air conditioning, and rooms in the front are noisy with open windows. **www.hotel-lou-cagnard.com**

ST TROPEZ Pastis Hôtel St Tropez P ≋ 🍸 ▤ ♿ €€€€

61 av du Général Leclerc, 83990 ***Tel*** *04 98 12 56 50* ***Fax*** *04 94 96 99 92* ***Rooms*** *9*

St-Tropez attracts more than its fair share of ostentation, but this nine-room inn decorated with contemporary art and a judicious mix of modern and antique furniture is for those who prefer a more discreet charm. The heated pool is surrounded by centuries-old palm trees. There is a strict "no dress code" policy. **www.pastis-st-tropez.com**

ST TROPEZ La Ponche P 🍴 🚸 ▤ €€€€€

Port des Pêcheurs, 83990 ***Tel*** *04 94 97 02 53* ***Fax*** *04 94 97 78 61* ***Rooms*** *18*

For those looking for a boutique hideaway in St Tropez, this cluster of one-time fishermen's cottages may fit the bill. The bedrooms are large and artfully chic, and include two family-size rooms. Among the famous guests have been Pablo Picasso and 1950s film star Romy Schneider. Closed Nov-mid-Feb. **www.laponche.com**

VENCE Mas de Vence ⇅ P 🍴 ≋ 🚸 ▤ ♿ €€

539 av Emile Hugues, 06140 ***Tel*** *04 93 58 06 16* ***Fax*** *04 93 24 04 21* ***Rooms*** *41*

This modern establishment may not appeal to those looking for somewhere quaint, but its architecture and colors are in keeping with Provençal tradition and it has excellent facilities including air-conditioned, insulated rooms, a small garden, and a terrace restaurant. **www.azurline.com**

VILLEFRANCHE-SUR-MER Hôtel La Flore ⇅ P ≋ 🚸 ▤ ♿ €€€

5 bd Princess Grace de Monaco, 06230 ***Tel*** *04 93 76 30 30* ***Fax*** *04 93 76 99 99* ***Rooms*** *31*

This traditional hotel dating from the beginning of the 20th century has been completely renovated in a Provençal style. The rooms are calm and overlook the sea and Villefranche's famous port. The Citadelle and a myriad of different restaurants are a few minutes' walk away. **www.hotel-la-flore.fr**

VILLEFRANCHE-SUR-MER Hôtel Versailles ⇅ P 🍴 ≋ ▤ €€€

7 bd Princesse Grace, 06230 ***Tel*** *04 93 76 52 52* ***Fax*** *04 93 01 97 48* ***Rooms*** *46*

This modern hotel has enough facilities for a longer stay, including a swimming pool, a restaurant specializing in Provençal cuisine, a large terrace, and bedrooms with great views. Perhaps its only (slight) drawback is its location on a busy thoroughfare. Secure parking. Closed Nov–mid-Mar. **www.hotelversailles.com**

CORSICA

AJACCIO Hôtel Kallisté P ▤ ♿ €€

51 cours Napoléon, 20000 ***Tel*** *04 95 51 34 45* ***Fax*** *04 95 21 79 00* ***Rooms*** *48*

Right in the middle of the busy Cours Napoléon, the rooms are surprisingly quiet in this well-run, clean hotel. Wrought-iron banisters and exposed stone walls add a rustic touch to the building, which dates back to 1864. Just a few minutes' walk to the train and bus stations. **www.cyrnos.net**

AJACCIO Hôtel Les Mouettes P ≋ 🚸 ▤ ♿ €€€

9, cours Lucien Bonaparte, 20000 ***Tel*** *04 95 50 40 40* ***Fax*** *04 95 21 71 80* ***Rooms*** *28*

Under new management since 2007, this hotel not far from the center of town has its own stretch of sandy beach – and a pool. The spacious rooms are decorated in classic style, reflecting the building's 19th-century façade. There's no restaurant but a hearty breakfast and snack plates are served. Closed mid-Nov–mid-Mar. **www.hotellesmouettes.fr**

BASTIA Hôtel Posta Vecchia ⇅ 🚸 ▤ €€

Quai des Martyrs de la Libération, 20200 ***Tel*** *04 95 32 32 38* ***Fax*** *04 95 32 14 05* ***Rooms*** *50*

Conveniently situated in the heart of the city, this busy hotel is next to the bustling, colorful, old port with its lively restaurants. Ask for a room in the front so that you can watch the evening promenade along the tree-lined quay. Public parking in front. **www.hotel-postavecchia.com**

BASTIA Hôtel Pietracap P ≋ ▤ €€€€

Rte San Martino, San Martino di Lota, 20200 ***Tel*** *04 95 31 64 63* ***Fax*** *04 95 31 39 00* ***Rooms*** *39*

Supremely comfortable hotel in a beautiful setting along the coast road from Bastia. A large park with 100-year-old olive trees separates the hotel from the sea. Large outdoor swimming pool. Private parking lot. Closed Dec–Apr. **www.hotel-pietracap.com**

BONIFACIO Hôtel le Royal P 🍴 ▤ €€

*8 rue Fred Scamaroni, 20169 **Tel** 04 95 73 00 51 **Fax** 04 95 73 04 68 **Rooms** 14*

Busy hotel in the old town with views over the cliffs and sea. Freshly painted, pastel-colored rooms. The cathedral is a few minutes' walk away, and steps lead down to the lively quayside. The little tourist train stops just outside. The restaurant serves mainly local dishes. **www.hotelleroyal.com**

BONIFACIO Hôtel Résidence du Center Nautique P 🍴 🚸 ▤ €€

*Port de Plaisanc, 20169 **Tel** 04 95 73 02 11 **Fax** 04 95 73 17 47 **Rooms** 11*

Re-opened in spring 2009 after renovations, this is the only hotel in Bonifacio that overlooks the harbor. Duplex rooms – some facing the port – are spacious and comfortable. The restaurant serves delicious food, though the service can be abrupt. The private parking is a bonus for the center of town location. Closed Oct–Mar. **www.center-nautique.com**

CALVI Hostellerie l'Abbaye ⇅ P ▤ €€€€

*Rte Santore, 20260 **Tel** 04 95 65 04 27 **Fax** 04 95 65 30 23 **Rooms** 43*

This pretty ivy-covered hotel was built on the walls of a 16th-century abbey. Ideally positioned on a slight incline, just above the port, it is set back from the road and is surrounded by an immaculate garden. A 5-minute walk takes you to the town center. Closed in winter. **www.hostellerie-abbaye.com**

CORTE Hôtel Dominique Colonna P ≋ 🚸 ▤ ♿ €€

*Vallée de la Restonica, 20250 **Tel** 04 95 45 25 65 **Fax** 04 95 61 03 91 **Rooms** 29*

It would be hard to imagine a more idyllic location than this lush green valley, with a small waterfall. Rooms are tastefully decorated in contemporary style and the service is impeccable. There is an excellent traditional restaurant next door, or the village restaurants are just 20-minutes' walk away. **www.dominique-colonna.com**

ÎLE ROUSSE Hôtel Santa Maria P ≋ 🚸 ▤ €€€

*Rte du Port, 20220 **Tel** 04 95 63 05 05 **Fax** 04 95 60 32 48 **Rooms** 56*

Superbly situated on the road to the islet of Île Rousse, this charming hotel has its own little beach and is just a short walk to the main square, with its stores and restaurants. All rooms have a terrace with sea views. Restaurant serves lunch in July and August. **www.hotelsantamaria.com**

PIANA Les Roches Rouges P 🍴 🚸 €€

*Rte Porto, 20115 **Tel** 04 95 27 81 81 **Fax** 04 95 27 81 76 **Rooms** 30*

Built in 1912, this splendid hotel retains all the charm of that era. Large, simply furnished rooms look out onto the bay of Porto, nominated by UNESCO as one of the world's five most beautiful bays. Excellent dining room with terrace and garden. Closed Nov–Mar. **www.lesrochesrouges.com**

PORTO Le Maquis P 🍴 €€

*Porto, 20150 **Tel** 04 95 26 12 19 **Fax** 04 95 26 18 55 **Rooms** 6*

Quiet family-run hotel on the outskirts of town, on the coast road to Calvi. Surprisingly sophisticated menu in the charming restaurant. Dramatic views over the mountains. Comfortable rooms, pretty garden, and parking available. Closed Dec–Jan. **www.hotel-lemaquis.com**

PORTO-VECCHIO Chez Franca P ▤ €€€€

*Rte de Bonifacio, 20137 **Tel** 04 95 70 15 56 **Fax** 04 95 72 18 41 **Rooms** 14*

This modern hotel is conveniently situated between the town and the port. A lot of care has gone into the renovation of the rooms. The superb beaches of Guilia and Palombaggia are a few kilometers away. Good base for excursions to Zonza and Bavella. Closed Dec. **www.francahotel.com**

PROPRIANO Le Lido 🍴 ▤ ♿ €€€

*Av Napoléon, 20110 **Tel** 04 95 76 06 37 **Fax** 04 95 76 31 18 **Rooms** 11*

Le Lido has a unique location on a rocky peninsula with a beach. The simple decor doesn't aim to compete with the setting, but terra cotta tiles, mosaics, and wood beams lend charm. Opt for a main floor room opening onto the beach. The very good restaurant specializes in oven-baked lobster. Closed Nov–mid-Apr. **www.le-lido.com**

SARTENE Hôtel St Damianu ⇅ P 🍴 ≋ 🚸 🏋 ▤ ♿ €€

*Quartier San Damien, 20100 **Tel** 04 95 70 55 41 **Fax** 04 95 70 55 78 **Rooms** 28*

A gem of a new hotel. Large airy rooms have terraces with fabulous views of the gulf of Valinco or the mountains. Facilities include a huge swimming pool surrounded with teak decking, a garden, *hammam*, disabled access, secure parking, and an excellent dining room. Closed Nov–Apr. **www.sandamianu.fr**

ST FLORENT Hôtel Maxime P €€

*Rte La Cathédrale, 20217 **Tel** 04 95 37 05 30 **Fax** 04 95 37 13 07 **Rooms** 19*

Set back from the street on the way to the 12th-century cathedral of Santa Maria Assunta, this modern hotel is an oasis of calm only a 1-minute walk from the hurly-burly of the fashionable port. Pleasant, airy rooms with sea views from the top floor.

VIZZAVONA Hôtel du Monte D'Oro P 🍴 €€

*Col de Vizzavona RN 193, 20219 **Tel** 04 95 47 21 06 **Fax** 04 95 47 22 05 **Rooms** 24*

You'll feel as though you are in an Agatha Christie novel the moment you walk into this charming hotel, built in 1880 and set in the forest on the road between Ajaccio and Bastia. Wood-paneled corridors, large living room, and elegant dining room serving organic food. A *gite* is also available for rent. Closed Nov–Apr. **www.monte-oro.com**

WHERE TO EAT

The French consider eating well an essential part of their national birthright. There are few other places where people are as passionately knowledgeable about their cuisine and their wine. Restaurant reviews, as well as cooking and food shows on television, are avidly followed and the general quality of both fresh food and restaurant offerings is vastly better in France than it is in most other European countries.

This introduction to the restaurant listings, which are arranged by region and town *(see pp600–51)*, looks at the different types of restaurant in France and gives practical tips on eating out, reading menus, ordering, and service – everything you need to know to enjoy your meal. At the front of the book is a guide to a typical menu and an introduction to French wine *(see pp24–7)*. The main food and wine features are at the beginning of each of the five regional sections.

FRENCH EATING HABITS

The traditional large meal at noon survives mainly in rural regions. In cities, lunch is increasingly likely to consist of a sandwich, salad, or a steak in a café, while dinner is the main meal of the day. Usually, lunch is from noon to 2pm and dinner is from 8 to 10pm, with last orders taken 30 minutes before closing time.

Some family-owned places are closed at weekends, so it may be difficult to find a meal anywhere outside your hotel on Sundays, except in large cities. Off the beaten track and in resort towns, restaurants and hotels are often closed out of season, so it is advisable to telephone ahead.

Over the past few decades, French eating habits have changed dramatically. The growing popularity of the cuisine of former French colonies means that North African and Vietnamese places are now easy to find, as are Chinese restaurants. Burger and Tex-Mex joints are also popular with young people. As city-dwellers and suburbanites in France have become almost as health-conscious as other Europeans, there has been an explosion of "light" foods; and the rise of the *hypermarchés* (hypermarkets) has resulted in less fresh produce on the menu as more frozen and prepared food is eaten.

REGIONAL COOKING

One of the great pleasures of traveling in France is sampling the country's regional cuisine. In every *département* of France, menus will nearly always include local specialties, which reflect predominant local products and agriculture. A good way to divide France gastronomically is the butter/olive oil divide. In the north, butter is generally used in cooking; in the south, olive oil; and in the southwest, goose and duck fat predominate.

Each region takes great pride in its own cuisine. Nationally, the best-known dishes come from four regions: Alsace, a province with close German ties; the southwest, where *cassoulet*, a rich stew of white beans, tomatoes, sausage, and duck is a well-loved dish; the Alps, which gave *fondue* to the nation; and Provence, famed for *bouillabaisse*, a rich fish soup from Marseille.

The gastronomic capital of France is, however, considered to be Lyon, which is home to a significant proportion of France's best restaurants and many superb no-nonsense bistros known as *bouchons*.

Typical elegant terrace restaurant in Provence

La Cigale, a Belle Epoque brasserie in Nantes *(see p623)*

RESTAURANTS

Encompassing the whole alphabet of French cuisine, restaurants in France range from tiny whitewashed places with rush-bottomed chairs to stately, wood-paneled château dining rooms and the top kitchens of famous chefs. Many hotels have fine restaurants open to non-residents, a selection of which can be found in the hotel listings *(see pp550–95)*.

Prices for restaurants of the same rating are more or less consistent throughout France except in large cities, where they can be more expensive. The quality of the food and service, though, is the most significant price factor and you can easily spend over €150 per head to eat at one of the top establishments.

There are several different kinds of French cuisine that you may come across. *Haute cuisine* is the traditional cooking method, where the flavor of the food is enhanced with rich sauces. *Nouvelle cuisine* challenged this method, especially for the diet-conscious, in using light rather than creamy sauces which bring out the texture and color of the ingredients. *Cuisine bourgeoise* is French home cooking. *Cuisine des Provinces* uses high-quality ingredients to prepare traditional rural dishes. *Jeune Cuisine Fran-çaise* is the latest trend, where young chefs have rebelled against Michelin traditions to create their own cooking style.

CAMEMBERT FABRIQUE EN NORMANDIE
LE FIN NORMAND
AFFINE
LAITERIE DE
Camembert

BISTROS

When the French go out to eat, they are most likely to visit the broadest class of restaurant, the bistro. Bistros vary enormously – some urban bistros are formally decorated, while those in smaller cities and in the country tend to be more casual. They offer a good, moderately priced meal from a traditional menu of an *entrée* or *hors d'oeuvre* (appetizer), *plats mijotés* (simmered dishes) and *grillades* (grilled fish and meats), followed by cheese and dessert.

The restaurant L'Excelsior at Nancy in Lorraine *(see p614)*

BRASSERIES

Brasseries have their origin in Alsace and were originally attached to breweries; the name brasserie actually means brewery. Usually found in larger cities, they are big, bustling places, many with fresh shellfish stands outside. They serve beer on tap as well as a *vin de la maison* (house wine) and a variety of regional wines. Menus include simple fish and grilled meat dishes along with Alsatian specialties like *choucroute garnie* (sauerkraut with sausage and pork). Prices are very much on a par with those you would pay at bistros. Like cafés, brasseries are usually open from morning until night and serve food all day long.

FERME-AUBERGES

In the country you may eat at a simple "farm inn," where good, inexpensive meals, often made with fresh farm produce, are eaten with your host's family as part of your room and board. For more details on *ferme-auberges*, see under Bed and Breakfast on page 548.

CAFES

Cafés represent the soul of France. Every place but the tiniest hamlet can be counted on to have a café, open as a rule from early in the morning until 10pm or so. They serve drinks, coffee, tea, simple meals, and snacks such as salads, omelets, and sandwiches throughout the day, and usually provide a cheaper breakfast than most hotels.

As well as serving refreshments, cafés are a good source of information and provide the traveler with endless opportunities to observe the French at their most relaxed.

In villages, almost the entire population might drift in and out of the single café during the course of a day, while large cities have cafés that cater for a specific clientele, such as workers or students. Paris's most famous cafés were traditional meeting places for intellectuals and artists to exchange ideas *(see p152)*.

Auberge du XII Siècle at Saché in the Loire Valley *(see p624)*

Tables outside a café in the Old Town of Nice on the Côte d'Azur

BISTRO ANNEXES

Over the past few years, baby-bistros or bistro annexes have appeared in larger cities, especially Paris and Lyon, as a new category of restaurant. They are lower-priced sister eateries of famous – and much more expensive – restaurants run by well-known chefs. Many of them offer *formule prix-fixe* (fixed-price) menus and the chance to sample the cooking of a celebrated kitchen in relaxed surroundings.

FAST FOOD

If you want to avoid the American fast food chains, wine bars and *salons du thé* are also good value for light meals. Cafeterias, found in some shopping centers, serve tasty food at reasonable prices.

RESERVATIONS

In cities and larger towns it is always best to make a reservation, especially from May to September. This rarely applies to cafés or in the country, where you can walk into most places without a reservation. However, if you are traveling in remote rural and resort areas off season, it is worth checking first that the restaurant is open all year.

If you have a reservation and your plans change, then you should call and cancel. Smaller restaurants, in particular, must fill all their tables to make a profit, and "no-shows" threaten their livelihood.

READING THE MENU AND ORDERING

When the menu is presented, you'll usually be asked if you'd like an aperitif. Since many French people do not drink spirits before a meal, this could be Kir (white wine mixed with a dash of blackcurrant liqueur), vermouth, light port (drunk in France as a cocktail), or a soft drink.

Opening the menu, *les entrées* or *hors d'oeuvre* are starters. *Les plats* are the main courses, and most restaurants will offer a *plat du jour*, or daily special; these are often seasonal or local dishes of particular interest. A selection of dishes from a classic French menu is given on pages 24–5.

Cheese is served as a separate course between the main course and dessert. Coffee is served black, unless you specify *"crème."* Alternatively, you can ask for a *tisane*, or herbal tea.

WINE

Restaurants mark up wine considerably, so it can be expensive to drink fine wine with your meal. Local wine, however, is often served in carafes. Ordering a *demi* (50 cl) or *quart* (25 cl) carafe is a cheap and enjoyable way to try out a region's wines.

French law divides the country's wines into four classes, in ascending order of quality: Vin de Table, Vin de Pays, Vin Délimité de Qualité Supérieure (VDQS), and Appellation d'Origine Contrôlée (AOC). The Vin de Table wines are rarely found in restaurants, but in choosing a regional wine (Vins de Pays upwards), refer to the wine features in the regional sections of this book. For an introduction to French wine, see pages 26–7.

When in doubt, order the house wine. Few restaurants will risk their reputation on an inferior house wine, and they often provide value for money.

WATER

Tap water is supplied on request free of charge, and is perfectly safe to drink. The French also pride themselves on their wide range of mineral waters. Favorite mealtime brands include Evian and the slightly fizzy Badoit.

LA CAVE DU MOULIN DE MOUGINS
LA CAVE DU MOULIN
LA CAVE DU MOULIN

Le Moulin de Mougins ***(see p650)***

HOW TO PAY

Visa/Carte Bleue (V) is the most widely accepted credit card in France. Mastercard/Access (MC) is also commonly accepted, while American Express (AE) and Diners Club (DC) tend to be accepted only in upmarket establishments. However, you should always carry plenty of

La Tour d'Argent in the Latin Quarter of Paris ***(see p603)*** cash, especially when touring the countryside, because many smaller restaurants still do not accept credit cards. If in doubt, ask when you make a reservation.

SERVICE AND TIPPING

The pace of a French meal is generally leisurely. People think nothing of spending 4 hours at the table, so if you are pressed for time, go to a café or brasserie. A service charge of 12.5 to 15 percent is almost always included in the price of your meal, but most French people leave a few euro cents behind in a café, and an additional 5 percent or so of the total bill in other restaurants. In the grander restaurants, which pride themselves on their service, an additional tip of 5 to 10 percent is correct.

Thirty euro cents is sufficient for restroom attendants, and 50 or 70 euro cents an item is appropriate for the cloakroom attendant.

DRESS CODE

Even when dressed casually, the French are generally well turned out; visitors should aim for the same level of presentable comfort. Running shoes, shorts, beach clothes, or active sportswear are unacceptable everywhere except cafés or beachside places.

The restaurant listings indicate which restaurants require men to wear a jacket and tie *(see pp600-51)*.

CHILDREN

French children are introduced early to restaurants and as a rule are well behaved. Consequently, children are well received almost everywhere in France. However, few restaurants provide special facilities like high chairs or baby seats, because children are expected to behave sensibly, and there is often not much room for strollers.

PETS

Dogs are usually accepted at all but the most elegant restaurants. Since the French are great dog lovers, do not be surprised to see your neighbor's lapdog sitting on the next door *banquette*.

The Eychenne hotel-restaurant at St-Girons in the Pyrenees *(see p588)*

SMOKING

Despite all attempts to circumvent the nonsmoking laws, especially in restaurants and cafés, the French have had to bow to the inevitable and should now adhere to government regulations about smoking in public.

Therefore, in line with other European countries, since 2007 smoking has been banned in all public places throughout France.

An elegant dining room in a hotel in Evian-les-Bains

WHEELCHAIR ACCESS

Though the restaurants of newer hotels usually provide wheelchair access, it is often restricted elsewhere. A word when you are booking your table should ensure that you are given a conveniently located table and assistance, if needed, when you arrive. The listings show restaurants with wheelchair access.

Refer also to page 549 of this book, which gives the names and addresses of some organizations that provide advice to disabled travelers in France.

VEGETARIAN FOOD

France remains difficult for vegetarians, although some progress has been made in recent years. In most non-vegetarian restaurants the main courses are firmly oriented toward meat and fish. However, you can often fare well by ordering from the *entrées* and should never be timid about asking for a dish to be served without its meat content. Provided you make your request in advance, most smart restaurants will prepare a special vegetarian dish.

Only larger cities and university towns are likely to have fully fledged vegetarian restaurants. Otherwise cafés, pizzerias, crêperies, and Oriental restaurants are good places to find vegetarian meals.

PICNICS

Picnicking is the best way to enjoy the wonderful fresh produce, local bread, cheeses, and *charcuterie* from the markets and enticing stores to be found all over France. For more details see pages 652–5.

Picnics are also a good way to eat cheaply and enjoy the French countryside. Picnicking areas along major roads are well marked and furnished with tables and chairs, but country lanes are better still.

Choosing a Restaurant

The restaurants in this guide have been selected across a wide range of price categories for their good value, exceptional food, and interesting location. This chart lists the restaurants by region, in chapter order. Map references for Paris restaurants correspond with the Paris Street Finder, *see pp154–69*.

PRICE CATEGORIES
The following price ranges are for a three-course meal for one, including a half-bottle of house wine, tax, and service:

€ under €30
€€ €30–€45
€€€ €45–€60
€€€€ €60–€90
€€€€€ over €90

PARIS

BASTILLE Bistrot du Peinture ⛱ €€
116 ave Ledru Rollin, 75011 ***Tel*** *01 47 00 34 39* ***Map*** 10 F5

This laid-back bistro, in a turn-of-the-century building with Art Deco moldings, is popular with local artists and media types who come for the decent prices and the busy terrace. The food is simple but decent, such as steak and excellent fish dishes, all served with *frites* and vegetables.

BASTILLE Le Bistrot Paul Bert 🚸 🍷 €€
18 rue Paul Bert, 75011 ***Tel*** *01 43 72 24 01*

This bistro's popularity is not surprising, given its combination of vintage decor – complete with zinc bar – and classic bistro cooking. Staff are welcoming, the steak-*frites* is one of the best in town, and the dining room is always buzzing with a mix of Parisians and international gourmets. The wine list is exceptional.

BASTILLE Le Repaire de Cartouche 🚸 €€
8 bd Filles du Calvaire, 75011 ***Tel*** *01 47 00 25 86* ***Map*** 10 D2

Rodolphe Paquin might not get as much press as some other Parisian chefs, but his two-level, country style restaurant continues to offer some of the best value for money in town. There's a bargain lunch menu and sophisticated *à la carte* offerings, such as *lièvre à la royale* (hare in wine sauce) and "crispy pig's head."

BEAUBOURG AND LES HALLES Aux Tonneaux des Halles 🚸 ♿ ⛱ 🍷 €
28 rue Montorgueil, 75001 ***Tel*** *01 42 33 36 19* ***Map*** 9 A1

A genuine Parisian bistro, Aux Tonneaux des Halles is one of the last surviving bistros of its kind, with its real zinc bar and one of the tiniest kitchens in Paris. Service is not particularly quick, but when the food is this good, who cares! The wine list offers good value.

BEAUBOURG AND LES HALLES Au Pied du Cochon 🚸 ☰ ♿ ⛱ 🍷 €€
6 rue Coquillière, 75004 ***Tel*** *01 40 13 77 00* ***Map*** 8 F1

This colorfully restored brasserie was once popular with high society, who came to observe the workers in the old market and to savor the onion soup. Although touristy, this huge place is fun, and its menu has something for everyone (including excellent shellfish). Still one of the best places after a night out.

BEAUBOURG AND LES HALLES Café Beaubourg 🚸 ☰ ⛱ €€
43 rue Saint-Merri, 75004 ***Tel*** *01 48 87 63 96* ***Map*** 9 B2

With views of the animated piazza of the Beaubourg museum, Café Beaubourg has elegant and contemporary decor. Simple and reliable, if slightly overpriced, fare is guaranteed – a variety of tartares, grilled meats, and fish. The menu even offers a light and tasty Thai salad.

BEAUBOURG AND LES HALLES Le Hangar 🚸 ⛱ €€
12 impasse Berthaud, 75003 ***Tel*** *01 42 74 55 44* ***Map*** 9 B2

Anyone who has found this locals' favorite in its quiet spot next door to the doll museum is sure to go back for the simple yet seductive cooking. Two trademark dishes are the panfried *foie gras* on olive oil mash and the runny chocolate cake. There isn't much in the way of decor, but the food more than makes up for it.

BEAUBOURG AND LES HALLES Le Tambour €€
41 rue Montmartre, 75002 ***Tel*** *01 42 33 06 90* ***Map*** 9 A1

This Les Halles institution, decorated with wacky Parisian memorabilia, serves food until 3:30am (until 1am Sun and Mon), making it a prized destination for Paris' night-owls. Its late-night hours do not reduce the quality of the fare, which is consistently restorative, hearty bistro food along the *steak-frites* line.

BEAUBOURG AND LES HALLES Chez la Vieille 🚸 🍷 €€€
1 rue de Bailleul, 75001 ***Tel*** *01 42 60 15 78* ***Map*** 8 F2

Portions are getting smaller in Paris restaurants, but not in this old-fashioned bistro where diners are encouraged to help themselves to pâtés, salads, and desserts, such as chocolate mousse and homemade tarts. Main dishes are equally hearty; think tripe stew or *blanquette de veau* (veal in white sauce).

Key to Symbols *see back cover flap*

BEAUBOURG AND LES HALLES Georges €€€€

19 rue Beaubourg, 75004 ***Tel*** *01 44 78 47 99* ***Map*** *9 B2*

On the top floor of the Pompidou Center, the Georges offers stunning views from its immense terrace. This trendy restaurant serves light and inspired cuisine, such as *mille-feuilles* of crab and mushrooms. Minimalist decor, with lots of steel and aluminum.

CHAILLOT AND PORTE MAILLOT Bistro le Goupil €€€

4 rue Claude Debussy, 75017 ***Tel*** *01 45 74 83 25* ***Map*** *1 C1*

This vintage bistro on the edge of Paris has a loyal following among locals, who come for the perfectly cooked entrecôte or more sophisticated dishes, such as monkfish with artichokes and wild mushrooms. The young chef surveys the lively scene from his open kitchen.

CHAILLOT AND PORTE MAILLOT Chez Géraud €€€

31 rue Vital, 75016 ***Tel*** *01 45 20 33 00* ***Map*** *5 B3*

Géraud Rongier, the jovial owner, is a scrupulous observer of *cuisine du marché*, using what's fresh at the market each day to create dishes like shoulder of lamb cooked on a spit, *sabodet* sausage in red wine sauce, skate with mustard, or roast pigeon with port sauce. The mural was specially created for the restaurant.

CHAILLOT AND PORTE MAILLOT La Plage €€€

Port Javel, 75015 ***Tel*** *01 40 59 41 00* ***Map*** *5 B5*

A spectacular site facing the Statue of Liberty on the Ile aux Cignes, the French and Mediterranean cuisine here is as good as the view. The huge terrace is the place to be seen at lunchtime, as well as an idyllic spot for a summer candlelit dinner. The decor is an attractive mix of wood and pastel tones. Service can be slow.

CHAILLOT AND PORTE MAILLOT Oum El Banine €€€

16 bis rue Dufrenoy, 75016 ***Tel*** *01 45 04 91 22* ***Map*** *5 A1*

The owner of this small, Moroccan restaurant in the chic residential quarter learned her art from her mother. Good *harira* (a thick, spicy soup), flavorful tagines, *pastilla* (a savory puff-pastry tart), and *brik* (stuffed pastry triangle). *Cous cous* served with five choices of *ragoût*.

CHAILLOT AND PORTE MAILLOT Le Timgad €€€€

21 rue Brunel, 75017 ***Tel*** *01 45 74 23 70* ***Map*** *1 C3*

Because this has been Paris's best-known, most elegant Maghrebian restaurant for years, it's essential to reserve ahead. The menu has many different *briks*, *tagines*, and *cous cous* dishes, as well as specialties like grilled pigeon, *pastilla*, and *méchoui* (whole roast lamb), which needs to be ordered in advance.

CHAILLOT AND PORTE MAILLOT Zébra Square P €€€€

3 pl Clément Ader, 75016 ***Tel*** *01 44 14 91 91* ***Map*** *5 B4*

Part of the Hotel Square complex, a modern building with stylish, minimalist decor spiced up by splashes of zebra prints. Equally modern fare: crab cakes, aubergine (eggplant) *carpaccio*, and salmon tartare. Brunch on Sundays. A hit with the fashion and media crowd.

CHAMPS-ELYSEES Granterroirs €

30 rue Miromesnil, 75008 ***Tel*** *01 47 42 18 18* ***Map*** *2 B4*

In the modish Champs-Elysées area it is a surprise to come across this *epicerie*-restaurant decorated like a country kitchen, with long, shared wooden tables. More than 800 products line the shelves, many of which can be tasted in salad and open sandwich plates; a different hot dish is served every day. Lunch only.

CHAMPS-ELYSEES Le Bœuf sur le Toit P €€€

34 rue du Colisée, 75008 ***Tel*** *01 53 93 65 55* ***Map*** *3 A4*

This Art Deco brasserie run by the Flo group, which owns many historic brasseries in Paris, is one of the more reliable places to eat around the Champs-Elysées. Alongside classic steak-*frites*, sole *meunière*, and seafood platters, you will find more adventurous specials such as coconut and mango soup and pineapple *mille-feuille*.

CHAMPS-ELYSEES La Fermette Marbeuf 1900 €€€

5 rue Marbeuf, 75008 ***Tel*** *01 53 23 08 00* ***Map*** *2 F5*

Fabulous Belle Epoque mosaics, tiles, and ironwork were discovered beneath the formica walls of this Champs Elysées bistro. La Fermette Marbeuf also serves good brasserie-style food, including a commendable set menu with a wide range of *appellations contrôlées* wines.

CHAMPS-ELYSEES Savy €€€

23 rue Bayard, 75008 ***Tel*** *01 47 23 46 98* ***Map*** *2 F1*

Opened in 1923, this Art-Deco restaurant with cozy booths in the front room is dedicated to the hearty cooking of the Aveyron region in central France. Order a marbled steak or the lamb shoulder for two, served with crisp shoestring *frites*, with one of the excellent wines from the cellar, perhaps a Mercury from Burgundy.

CHAMPS-ELYSEES La Païva €€€€

25 av des Champs Elysées, 75008 ***Tel*** *01 53 53 25 25* ***Map*** *3 A5*

Inside the Hôtel Païva, one of the Champs Elysées most beautiful mansions, is this chic restaurant decorated by Jacques Garcia in the style of a 19th-century boudoir. Main meals are reminiscent of good home cooking with hearty dishes such as herb-crusted lamb and lemon meringue pie. Snacks and more decadent pleasures are served throughout the day.

CHAMPS-ELYSEES Sens P €€€€

23 rue Ponthieu, 75008 ***Tel*** *01 42 25 95 00* ***Map*** *3 A5*

This new concept restaurant, clad in soft grays and silvers, makes clever use of lighting to create the urban-chic feel that attracts the trendy crowd. Plastic, trunk-like pillars prop up the mezzanine. The menu features interesting Asian-influenced dishes such as chicken with lemongrass and chestnut purée.

CHAMPS-ELYSEES Lasserre €€€€€

17 av Franklin Roosevelt, 75008 ***Tel*** *01 43 59 02 13* ***Map*** *7 A1*

Built for the 1937 World Fair to imitate the interior of a luxury liner, this Michelin-starred restaurant, once favored by Marc Chagall and Dalí, combines opulent decor with exceptional wines and deliciously refined cuisine by chef Jean-Louis Nomicos. His dishes are inspired by 19th-century recipes such as macaroni with black truffles. Service is faultless.

CHAMPS-ELYSEES Le Cinq P €€€€€

31 av George V, 75008 ***Tel*** *01 49 52 70 00* ***Map*** *2 E5*

For a rare splurge, it's hard to do better than this sumptuous restaurant in the George V. The technically stunning food is not stuck in a time warp; ingredients such as wasabi and harissa make their way into some dishes. The €85 lunch menu is something of a bargain, given the quality of the food.

CHAMPS-ELYSEES Pavillon Ledoyen P €€€€€

1 av Dutuit, 75008 ***Tel*** *01 53 05 10 01* ***Map*** *7 B1*

The cuisine at Pavillon Ledoyen is refined with turbot fillet and new potatoes with truffle butter and *Mille-feuilles de Krampouz croustillante avec crème de citron* (crispy pancake with lemon cream). Ask for a table in the dining room – a re-creation of a 1950s grill room – or one on the terrace.

ILE DE LA CITE AND ILE SAINT-LOUIS Isami €€€

4 quai Orléans, 75004 ***Tel*** *01 40 46 06 97* ***Map*** *9 C4*

As you walk through the door of this little Seine-side restaurant the hostess will warn you that they "serve only raw fish here", which is why this restaurant is so popular with Japanese expats and locals who come here for sushi of a quality rarely found in Paris. Japanese crockery lines the shelves and a peaceful atmosphere prevails.

ILE DE LA CITE AND ILE SAINT-LOUIS Mon Vieil Ami €€€

69 rue St Louis en l'Ile, 75004 ***Tel*** *01 40 46 01 35* ***Map*** *9 B4*

Star Alsatian chef Antoine Westermann runs this modern bistro with stone walls, frosted glass partitions, and a long shared table on one side. Vegetables from market gardener Joël Thiébault feature in inventive dishes, which occasionally draw on North African ingredients such as preserved lemon or *cous cous*.

INVALIDES AND EIFFEL TOWER QUARTER La Villa Corse €€

164 bd de Grenelle, 75015 ***Tel*** *01 53 86 70 81* ***Map*** *6 E5*

In a pleasant neighborhood, La Villa Corse is one of the city's best restaurants for fresh and strongly flavored Corsican-Mediterranean cuisine. The menu features wild boar stew, olive veal, Brocciu cheese, and chestnut bread – a specialty from the city of Bonifacio. Good choice of Corsican wines.

INVALIDES AND EIFFEL TOWER QUARTER Le Troquet P €€

21 rue François Bonvin, 75015 ***Tel*** *01 45 66 89 00*

This is a jewel in an unlikely residential street with a view of the Eiffel Tower. Locals soak up the friendly atmosphere and devour Basque chef Christian Etchebest's fabulous cooking. The menu is chalked up on a blackboard each day in the retro-style dining room.

INVALIDES AND EIFFEL TOWER QUARTER Au Bon Accueil €€€

14 rue Monttessuy, 75007 ***Tel*** *01 47 05 46 11* ***Map*** *6 E2*

Au Bon Accueil looks like a bistro from the outside with its terrace overlooking the Eiffel Tower but, once inside, the quality of the food and chic contemporary decor make it feel like a mini *haute cuisine* restaurant. If you are on a budget, try the amazing-value *prix fixe* menus at lunch and dinner, which don't skimp on ingredients.

INVALIDES AND EIFFEL TOWER QUARTER L'Arpège €€€€€

84 rue de Varenne, 75007 ***Tel*** *01 47 05 09 06* ***Map*** *7 B3*

Alain Passard's three-star restaurant near the Musée Rodin is one of the most highly regarded in Paris. It has striking pale-wood decor, sprightly young service, and excellent food. Options include T-bone of Lozère lamb flavored with Menton lemon and coriander, and *gnocchi d'Alice* with sage. Don't miss the apple tart.

INVALIDES AND EIFFEL TOWER QUARTER Le Jules Verne €€€€€

2nd platform, Eiffel Tower, 75007 ***Tel*** *01 45 55 61 44* ***Map*** *6 D3*

This is no tourist trap: reservations at the Jules Verne on the second platform of the Eiffel Tower are among the hardest to obtain in Paris. The sleek, all-black decor suits the monument perfectly and the pretty, flavorful cuisine is very good, indeed.

JARDIN DES PLANTES QUARTER Marty Restaurant P €€€

20 av des Gobelins, 75005 ***Tel*** *01 43 31 39 51* ***Map*** *13 B3*

The Marty was established by E. Marty in 1913 and is still family run. The interior is authentic Art Deco in style, but the cuisine steals the show. The menu features hearty fare, such as roast duck or rabbit casserole, and seasonal dishes, such as gazpacho. Excellent *crème brûlée*.

LATIN QUARTER Le Grenier de Notre Dame P 🧒 ♿ ⛱ 🍷 €

18 rue de la Bûcherie, 75005 ***Tel*** *01 43 29 98 29* ***Map*** *9 A4*

Le Grenier de Notre Dame opened in the 1970s and still exudes its original hippie atmosphere. Mostly organic ingredients go into the filling meals such as fish gratin, vegetarian casserole, or vegetarian escalope in breadcrumbs. Good choice of reasonably priced wines, including some vintage Bordeaux wines.

LATIN QUARTER Perraudin 🧒 €

157 rue St-Jacques, 75005 ***Tel*** *01 46 33 15 75* ***Map*** *12 F1*

From the red-and-white tablecloths to the zinc-topped bar and the cuisine, everything at Perraudin looks and feels like a genuine 1900s bistro. On the menu are staples like *carré* of lamb and *frites*, *carpaccio* of beef with parmesan, and creamy *riz au lait* (rice pudding). Reservations for 7–8pm only – or wait at the bar (tables turn over quickly.)

LATIN QUARTER Le Balzar 🧒 ⛱ €€

49 rue des Ecoles, 75005 ***Tel*** *01 43 54 13 67* ***Map*** *9 A5*

There's a fair choice of brasserie food here but the main attraction is the Left Bank ambience. Traditionally dressed waiters weave their way among the hustle and bustle, providing express service, with archetypal brasserie decor to match: there are large mirrors and comfortable leather seats.

LATIN QUARTER Le Petit Pontoise 🧒 ☰ ⛱ 🍷 €€

9 rue Pontoise, 75005 ***Tel*** *01 43 29 25 20* ***Map*** *9 B5*

This is a popular neighborhood venue, where herbs and spices are used inventively on the daily changing menu. A perfect menu will probably be composed of *foie gras* with figs, followed by a whole vanilla roasted sea-bass, and, finally, pineapple roasted in ginger. Reservations recommended.

LATIN QUARTER Le Pré Verre 🧒 🍷 €€

19 rue du Sommerard, 75005 ***Tel*** *01 43 54 59 47* ***Map*** *9 A5*

The brothers Marc and Philippe Delacourcelle run this plum-walled bistro whose cooking draws liberally on Asian ingredients – a signature dish is salt cod roasted with cassia bark and served with smoked potato purée. Wines come from small producers. The dining room is always lively.

LATIN QUARTER La Tour d'Argent P 🧒 ☰ ♿ 👔 🍷 €€€€€

15–17 quai de la Tournelle, 75005 ***Tel*** *01 43 54 23 31* ***Map*** *9 B5*

Established in 1582, originally in a stone tower, the Tour appears to be eternal. The young chefs hired by patrician owner Claude Terrail have rejuvenated the classic menu at this luxurious panoramic restaurant, with one of the finest wine cellars. The ground-floor bar is also a gastronomic museum. There's a cheaper set menu at lunchtime.

MONTMARTRE Amour ⛱ €

8 rue de Navarin, 75009 ***Tel*** *01 48 78 31 80* ***Map*** *4 F2*

Food at this low-key but trendy bistro, with vintage decor below Montmartre in the fashionable 9th *arrondissement*, is a cross between all things French and Anglo Saxon. Think macaroni and cheese, burgers, and *crème brulée*. In summer request a table in the pretty courtyard.

MONTMARTRE Au Grain de Folie 💳 🧒 €

24 rue la Vieuville, 75018 ***Tel*** *01 42 58 15 57* ***Map*** *4 F1*

Paris has few vegetarian restaurants, and this one has a truly cozy feel. The main courses consist of salads with interesting combinations of vegetables and grains (most of which are organic). Au Grain de Folie's apple crumble is highly recommended, so be sure to leave room for it.

MONTMARTRE La Famille 🍷 €€

41 rue des Trois Frères, 75009 ***Tel*** *01 42 52 11 12* ***Map*** *4 F1*

The contemporary French cuisine at La Famille is as delicious as it is avant-garde. Don't be surprised if your meal is presented with a smiley face drawn in the sauce! The marinated salmon in a thyme and rosemary crust is excellent. The decor borders on minimalist.

MONTMARTRE Le Ch'ti Catalan 🧒 €€

4 rue Navarin, 75009 ***Tel*** *01 44 63 04 33* ***Map*** *4 F2*

Two friends, one from the north of France and the other from the north of Spain, run this ocher-walled restaurant in popular Pigalle. Ingredients from these opposing regions meet in dishes such as *endives gratiné* with manchego. The friendly, English-speaking co-owner will be happy to explain the menu.

MONTMARTRE Le Wepler 🧒 ♿ ⛱ 🍷 €€

14 pl de Clichy, 75018 ***Tel*** *01 45 22 53 24* ***Map*** *6 D1*

Established in 1892, this retro-style brasserie is open until late into the night. Good for afternoon tea, early evening cocktails, and pre- or post-show dinners. Le Wepler serves appetizing large shellfish platters as well as sauerkraut, *andouillette* (sausage), and *confit de canard*.

MONTPARNASSE Port Manech 🧒 ⛱ €

52 rue du Montparnasse, 75014 ***Tel*** *01 43 21 96 98* ***Map*** *12 D2*

Port Manech is just like a little piece of Brittany right here in Paris. Try the tasty pancakes such as Provençal (mushrooms and snail butter) washed down perfectly with a cup of cider. There is a large choice of flambéed pancake varieties for dessert.

MONTPARNASSE La Régalade 🚸 ▤ **€€**
49 av Jean Moulin, 75014 ***Tel*** *01 45 45 68 58* ***Map*** *11 C5*

Gourmet fare for a bargain at this traditional bistro. Try the duck *foie gras* casserole or panfried cod with leek vinaigrette for a main course, and the chef's specialty Grand Marnier soufflé for dessert. The seasonal menu is based on a *cuisine du marché*. Reservations essential.

MONTPARNASSE Le Timbre 🚸 🍷 **€€**
3 rue Sainte Beuve, 75006 ***Tel*** *01 45 49 10 40* ***Map*** *12 D1*

British native Chris Wright runs this postage-stamp-sized bistro with an open kitchen near the Luxembourg gardens. If the blackboard menu is resolutely French with neo-bistro dishes such as lentil salad with pork cheek or sea bream with olives, the plate of British cheese does pay tribute to his origins.

MONTPARNASSE Restaurant l'Assiette 🚸 ▤ 🍷 **€€€**
181 rue du Château, 75014 ***Tel*** *01 43 22 64 86* ***Map*** *11 C4*

Long run by cigar-smoking chef Lulu and frequented by socialist politicians, this insider's bistro was taken over by the young, Alain Ducasse-trained David Rathgeber in 2008. His menu of bistro classics such as marinated herrings with warm potato salad and crème caramel "revisited" is attracting a younger set of celebrities.

MONTPARNASSE La Cagouille 🚸 ⛱ **€€€**
10–12 pl Constantin Brancusi, 75014 ***Tel*** *01 43 22 09 01* ***Map*** *11 C3*

This large venue, on the stark new place Brancusi in the rebuilt Montparnasse district, is one of Paris's best fish restaurants. Fish is served simply with few sauces or adornments. Unusual seasonal delicacies might include black bay scallops and *vendangeurs* (tiny red mullet).

MONTPARNASSE La Coupole ▤ 🍷 **€€€**
102 bd du Montparnasse, 75014 ***Tel*** *01 43 20 14 20* ***Map*** *12 D2*

This famous brasserie has been popular with the fashionistas, artists, and thinkers since its creation in 1927. Under the same ownership as Brasserie Flo, it has a similar menu: shellfish, smoked salmon, and good desserts. Lamb curry is a specialty. Open from breakfast until 2am.

OPERA QUARTER Chartier 🚸 ♿ **€**
7 rue du Faubourg Montmartre, 75009 ***Tel*** *01 47 70 86 29* ***Map*** *4 F4*

Despite its impressive 1900s decor, Chartier caters to people on a budget, mostly students and tourists, though some of the old *habitués* still come back for the basic cuisine (hard-boiled eggs with mayonnaise, house pâté, roast chicken, and pepper steak). Expect no-frills service; the waiters are very busy.

OPERA QUARTER La Bourse ou la Vie 🚸 **€€**
12 rue Vivienne, 75002 ***Tel*** *01 42 60 08 83* ***Map*** *10 F5*

Looking for the best steak-*frites* in Paris? You may well find it at this restaurant with a red-and-yellow 1940s decor near the old stock exchange. The secret here is top-quality meat and the animal fat that is used to cook the *frites*; order it doused in creamy cracked-peppercorn sauce. A soundtrack of French chanson adds to the atmosphere.

OPERA QUARTER Willi's Wine Bar 🚸 🍷 **€€**
13 rue des Petits-Champs, 75001 ***Tel*** *01 42 61 05 09* ***Map*** *8 F1*

Original wine posters cover the walls of this wine bar, and over 250 vintages are kept in the cellar. The menu includes onion tart with a salad topped with pine nuts, beef *fricassée* with braised chicory (endive) and rosemary sauce, and "Willi's Ancestral" bitter chocolate terrine.

OPERA QUARTER La Vaudeville 🚸 ⛱ 🍷 **€€€**
29 rue Vivienne, 75002 ***Tel*** *01 40 20 04 62* ***Map*** *4 F5*

This is one of seven brasseries owned by Paris's reigning brasserie king, Jean-Paul Bucher. Good shellfish, Bucher's famous smoked salmon, many fish dishes as well as classic brasserie standbys like pig's trotters and *andouillette* (tripe sausage). Quick, friendly service and a noisy ambience make it fun.

OPERA QUARTER Un Jour à Peyrassol 🍷 **€€€**
13 rue Vivienne, 75002 ***Tel*** *01 42 60 12 92* ***Map*** *10 F5*

The Commanderie de Peyrassol, one of the best vineyards in Provence, runs this restaurant dedicated to truffles, wine, and other products from the area. The two rustic-meets-modern dining rooms have a warm Provençal atmosphere, reinforced by the earthy aroma of dishes such as truffle-laced scrambled eggs.

OPERA QUARTER Drouant P ▤ ⛱ 👔 🍷 **€€€€**
16–18 pl Gaillon, 75002 ***Tel*** *01 42 65 15 16* ***Map*** *4 E5*

This former Alsatian brasserie founded in 1880 is now a contemporary restaurant run by Antoine Westermann (who is also behind the bistro Mon Vieil Ami *see p602*). Order *à la carte* to sample his generous *hors d'oeuvres*, which fill the table with little bowls and plates. Upstairs are several private salons for groups.

OPERA QUARTER La Fontaine Gaillon P 🚸 ▤ ⛱ 🍷 **€€€€**
1 rue de la Michodière, 75002 ***Tel*** *01 47 42 63 22* ***Map*** *4 E5*

Housed in a 17th-century mansion, Fontaine Gaillon is partly owned by legendary film actor Gérard Depardieu. The menu changes daily and might include *confit de canard* or lamb chops and strawberries in Anjou wine. The interiors are comfortable, and there is a good wine list.

Key to Price Guide *see p600* **Key to Symbols** *see back cover flap*

SAINT-GERMAIN-DES-PRES Chez les Filles €

64 rue du Cherche Midi, 75006 ***Tel*** *01 45 48 61 54* ***Map*** *7 C5*

Moroccan sisters run this small, lively restaurant, with exotic afternoon tea breaks. Tagines, salads, and *cous cous* are on the lunch menu, while teatime treats include great pastries washed down with lots of mint tea. The interior features wrought-iron work and *kilims* bearing Moroccan accents. Closed Sun.

SAINT-GERMAIN-DES-PRES La Crèmerie €

9 rue Quatre Vents, 75006 ***Tel*** *01 43 54 99 30* ***Map*** *8 E4*

A former dairy store dating from 1880, this little store with a painted glass ceiling has been a wine bar since the 1950s. The current owners, a pair of former architects, focus on "natural" wines served with bread and butter from Brittany, hams from Spain, sausage from the Ardèche, and burrata cheese from Puglia in Italy.

SAINT-GERMAIN-DES-PRES J'Go €€

Rue Clement, 75006 ***Tel*** *01 43 26 19 02* ***Map*** *8 E4*

This lively Toulousian wine bar doubles as a *rotisserie* serving juicy spit-roasted lamb from Quercy, whole-roasted chicken, and black pig from Bigorre. The set menu is excellent value, offering pâté, a giant salad, and delicious lamb with creamy white beans. *Tapas* are also served and the wine (by the bottle or the glass) is consistently excellent.

SAINT-GERMAIN-DES-PRES L'Epigramme €€

9 rue de l'Eperon, 75006 ***Tel*** *01 44 41 00 09* ***Map*** *8 F4*

With terra cotta tiles, wood beams, and windows looking onto a leafy courtyard, L'Epigramme has plenty of Left Bank charm. The glassed-in kitchen turns out impeccable modern bistro food such as Basque farmer's pork on a bed of turnip *choucroute*; also look out for game in season. Service is equally polished.

SAINT-GERMAIN-DES-PRES Polidor €€

41 rue Monsieur le Prince, 75006 ***Tel*** *01 43 26 95 34* ***Map*** *8 F5*

Once frequented by Verlaine and Rimbaud, this is bohemian Paris incarnate. The place has kept its reputation by sticking to traditional cuisine at rock-bottom prices. Grilled steak, *daube de bœuf*, Marengo veal (slow cooked with tomatoes), and various dessert tarts feature on the menu.

ST-GERMAIN-DES-PRES Joséphine Chez Dumonet €€€

117 rue du Cherche-Midi, 75006 ***Tel*** *01 45 48 52 40* ***Map*** *11 C1*

Pre-World War II bistros with old-fashioned menus have become a rarity in Paris, which explains the popularity of Joséphine. Start with the help-yourself marinated herring before superb steak tartare or perhaps a rib-sticking cassoulet; desserts are equally gargantuan. The wine list is lengthy and expensive.

SAINT-GERMAIN-DES-PRES Procope €€€

13 rue de l'Ancienne Comédie, 75006 ***Tel*** *01 40 46 79 00* ***Map*** *8 F4*

Opened in 1686, Paris's oldest café welcomed literary and political figures such as Voltaire and Diderot. Nowadays, it's still a hub for the intelligentsia, who sit alongside those curious about this historical place. *Coq au vin* (chicken cooked in wine) is the specialty. Shellfish platters, too.

THE MARAIS Chez Hannah €

54 rue des Rosiers, 75004 ***Tel*** *01 42 74 74 99* ***Map*** *9 C3*

L'As du Fallafel may be better known, but Chez Hannah serves falafel sandwiches to rival any in this street filled with Jewish delis. They come packed with crunchy garbanzo bean balls, tahini sauce, melting aubergine (eggplant) and chilli, to be eaten in the lively dining room or standing in the street. A locals' favorite.

THE MARAIS Bistrot de L'Oulette €€

38 rue des Tournelles, 75004 ***Tel*** *01 42 71 43 33* ***Map*** *10 E3*

A tiny restaurant with good-quality food at reasonable prices. The fixed-price menu is particularly good value. Southwestern cuisine includes delicious rabbit *confit*, braised oxtail, pears poached in Madeira and Cassis (blackcurrant liqueur), and superb homemade chestnut bread.

THE MARAIS Chez Jenny €€

39 bd du Temple, 75003 ***Tel*** *01 44 54 39 00* ***Map*** *10 D1*

This huge brasserie on the place de la République, with waitresses in traditional dress, has been a bastion of Alsatian cooking since it was founded more than 60 years ago. The *choucroute* (sauerkraut) *spéciale Jenny* makes a hearty meal, followed by a sorbet and a fruit liqueur.

THE MARAIS Le Colimaçon €€

44 rue Vieille du Temple, 75004 ***Tel*** *01 48 87 12 01* ***Map*** *9 C3*

Le Colimaçon (snail) refers to the restaurant's centerpiece: a corkscrew staircase. A historically preserved building dating from 1732, it has period wooden beams in the ceiling. Snails are also on the menu, along with frogs' legs in parsley and tomato sauce and *blanquette* of veal, the house specialty.

THE MARAIS Le 404 €€

69 rue des Gravilliers, 75003 ***Tel*** *01 42 74 57 81* ***Map*** *9 B1*

It's a party every night at this North African restaurant lined with low tables and ottomans (there is also seating in the mezzanine). The later the hour, the higher the volume and by the end of the night everyone is on their feet. The food is good, too: try one of the tagines, such as the duck version with apples and cinnamon.

THE MARAIS Les Philosophes 👶 ⛱ €€

28 rue Vieille du Temple, 75003 ***Tel*** *01 48 87 49 64* ***Map*** *9 C3*

Among the many cafés run by Xavier Denamour in this street, Les Philosophes is the most popular at meal times for its above-average bistro fare: the steak-*frites* are just as they should be and tomato *tarte tatin* is a specialty. The terrace is perfect for people-watching and service is jovial if rushed. Finish with the espresso cake.

THE MARAIS Le Gaigne 🍷 €€€

12 rue Pecquay, 75004 ***Tel*** *01 44 59 86 72* ***Map*** *9 C2*

Young chef Mickaël Gaignon had years of *haute cuisine* training under his belt before opening this intimate ivory-and-plum dining room with paintings of food on the walls. His inventive cooking focuses on the quality of the ingredients, such as scallop tartare flavored with lemon and served with red chicory.

THE MARAIS L'Ambroisie P 👶 ☰ ♿ ⛱ 🍸 🍷 €€€€€

9 pl des Vosges, 75004 ***Tel*** *01 42 78 51 45* ***Map*** *10 D3*

In a former jewelry store restored by Chef Bernard Pacaud, this is one of only a handful of Parisian restaurants with three Michelin stars. The cuisine includes a langoustine *feuillantine* (langoustines wrapped in very thin pastry) flavored with sesame seeds, and veal escalope served with minced artichokes. Reservations accepted one month in advance.

TUILERIES Le Fumoir 👶 ☰ ⛱ €€

6 rue de l'Amiral Coligny, 75001 ***Tel*** *01 42 92 00 24* ***Map*** *4 F2*

A café by day and a rather sultry restaurant-bar at night, Le Fumoir serves remarkably good food with a Scandinavian touch that often appears in condiments such as cranberries or horseradish. Cocktails are good and there is an intimate library at the back with big leather armchairs.

TUILERIES QUARTER Café Marly 👶 ☰ ⛱ €€€

93 rue de Rivoli, 75001 ***Tel*** *01 49 26 06 60* ***Map*** *8 E2*

In a wing of the Louvre, this is a handy restaurant when feet ache and bellies rumble after trekking round the galleries. You'll find everything from salads and burgers to traditional and contemporary French cusine. It's also in a top spot for a coffee on the terrace overlooking the Louvre's main thoroughfare.

TUILERIES QUARTER Le Grand Véfour P 👶 ☰ ♿ 🍸 🍷 €€€€€

17 rue de Beaujolais, 75001 ***Tel*** *01 42 96 56 27* ***Map*** *12 F1*

This 18th-century restaurant has two Michelin stars and is considered by many to be Paris's most attractive. Chef Guy Martin's creative dishes include *foie gras* ravioli with a truffle sauce, and hazelnuts and chocolate with caramel ice cream and sea salt.

ILE DE FRANCE

BARBIZON Hôtellerie du Bas-bréau P 👶 ☰ ♿ ⛱ 🍷 €€€€€

20 rue grande, 77630 ***Tel*** *01 60 66 40 05*

Author Robert Louis Stevenson has been among the celebrated guests at this hotel-restaurant with its classic menu and enormous wine list. The much-praised cooking includes sole with caviar, wild boar, and venison in season, and, for dessert, Grand Marnier soufflé.

BOULOGNE-BILLANCOURT Boulogne sur Mer 👶 ♿ ⛱ €€€

11 bis av Jean-Baptiste-Clément, 92100 ***Tel*** *01 46 04 12 87*

With only seven tables, this restaurant, attached to a fish store of the same name, serves only the freshest fish and seafood. Wood floors, white tablecloths, and picture windows create a cheerful atmosphere in which to savor oysters of different origins, a seafood platter, or perhaps the sole *meunière*.

DAMPIERRE Auberge Saint-Pierre ♿ 🍷 €€

1 rue de Chevreuse, 78720 ***Tel*** *01 30 52 53 53*

This half-timbered inn facing the grand château de Dampierre has a rustic, convivial dining room. The gourmet menu has fine dishes such as tartare of potatoes with *foie gras*, salad of baby scallops with white radish, stuffed quail with lentils, and chicken leg with *foie gras* stuffing.

FONTAINEBLEAU Le Caveau des Ducs 👶 ⛱ 🍷 €€€

24 rue de Ferrare, 77300 ***Tel*** *01 64 22 05 05*

Near the château de Fontainebleau, this restaurant has a carved staircase leading to the magnificent 17th-century cellars that house the dining room, decorated with tapestries and chandeliers. Classic cuisine, such as snails in puff pastry. Good lunch menu of main course salad and a glass of wine.

ISSY-LES-MOULINEAUX Les Symples de l'Os à Moelle 👶 €€

18 av de la République, 92130 ***Tel*** *01 41 08 02 52*

This restaurant replicates the winning formula of La Cave de l'Os à Moelle, an annex of the gourmet bistro L'Os à Moelle in the 15th arrondissement. Seated at long tables, diners help themselves to a multitude of pâtés, soups, and salads which are followed by a hearty main course and a buffet of cheeses and desserts... all for €25.

LE-PERREUX-SUR-MARNE Les Magnolias €€€€

48 av de Bry, 94170 ***Tel*** *01 48 72 47 43*

After working in a series of *haute-cuisine* restaurants, young chef Jean Chauvel went out on a limb and opened this wildly creative restaurant in a little-known suburb of Paris. The risk has paid off: food-lovers come from far and wide for his graphically presented dishes, each of which comes with a whimsical menu description.

MAISONS-LAFFITTE Les Jardins de la Vieille Fontaine €€€

8 av Grétry, 78600 ***Tel*** *01 39 62 01 78*

An elegant setting inside a beautiful white mansion near the Maisons-Laffitte Park. Seasonal menus offer gastronomic cuisine in an unpretentious manner. Delicious, well-presented dishes like a *mille-feuille* of goat's cheese and aubergine (eggplant) or panfried cod with a cinnamon and lemongrass sauce. Irresistible desserts. Reasonably priced wine.

NEUILLY-SUR-SEINE Le Zinc Zinc €€

209 ter av du Général-de-Gaulle, 92200 ***Tel*** *01 40 88 36 06*

Le Zinc Zinc has reinvented the bistro for the 21st century, serving breakfast, lunch, *tapas*, and dinner with a huge choice of dishes for every appetite. You can sit at the bar for a simple meal of steak-*frites* or Spanish ham, or have a three-course dinner of contemporary bistro fare in the bordeaux-and-cream dining room.

PROVINS Aux Vieux Remparts €€€

3 rue Couverte, 77160 ***Tel*** *01 64 08 94 00*

In the medieval part of town, this timbered building boasts two restaurants and a hotel. The Petite Ecu offers traditional fare, while the Aux Vieux Ramparts is a gastronomic restaurant serving creative fare such as prawns with aubergine (eggplant) caviar, carpaccio of monk fish, and chocolate tart.

RAMBOUILLET Le Cheval Rouge €

78 rue du Général de Gaulle, 78120 ***Tel*** *01 30 88 80 61*

A small restaurant near the château with a good-humored chef who presents specialties such as terrine of red onions, steak seasoned with five peppers, confit of pheasant with chicory, and stuffed quail *à la champenoise*. Great lunchtime buffet. Some tables are in the conservatory.

RUEIL-MALMAISON Relais de St-Cucufa €€€

114 rue Générale-de-Miribel, 92500 ***Tel*** *01 47 49 79 05*

Combining Breton and Italian flair, the chefs present a traditional menu that includes morille soup with poached egg; lobster, grapefruit, and avocado salad; platter of grilled shellfish; fillet of beef and roast lamb. Enjoy lunch in the attractive garden or dinner in front of the fire. Classic wine selection.

ST-GERMAIN-EN-LAYE Ermitage des Loges €€€

11 av des Loges, 78100 ***Tel*** *01 39 21 50 90*

In an elegant setting near the château, this restaurant is frequented by locals. The young chef enlivens classic dishes, such as entrecôte steak with panfried Jerusalem artichokes, gratin of scallops and braised chicory, and *mille-feuille* of tomato and scorpion fish. The children's menu is excellent value.

ST-OUEN Le Soleil €€€

109 av Michelet, 93400 ***Tel*** *01 40 10 08 08*

Steps away from the St-Ouen flea market and a short drive from the Stade de France, this charming bistro has a vibrant interior. The menu includes duck confit with spicy aubergine (eggplant) or more classic dishes such as a Charolais entrecôte. Superb Rum baba for dessert. Good, slightly expensive wine. Reserve ahead.

VERSAILLES La Terrasse €€

11 rue St-Honoré, 78000 ***Tel*** *01 39 50 76 00*

A fun restaurant specializing in southwestern cuisine. On a warm day the large, shaded terrace is a godsend. The decor inside is bright and kitsch. Try one of their *assiettes gourmandes*, a huge plate filled with delights such as duck, *foie gras*, prawns, truffles, and sautéed potatoes.

VERSAILLES Le Valmont €€€€

20 rue au Pain, 78000 ***Tel*** *01 39 51 39 00*

Refined cuisine at this yellow-and-blue bistro tucked behind the market hall. Chef Philippe Mathieu presents an ambitious menu with dishes such as escalope of *foie gras* deglazed with Banyul vinegar, John Dory with a leek and star anise sauce, and veal with a creamy *cèpe* sauce. Good wines by the glass.

LE NORD & PICARDY

AIRE-SUR-LA-LYS Hostellerie des Trois Mousquetaires €€€

Château de la Redoute, rte de Béthune, 62120 ***Tel*** *03 21 39 01 11*

Rural peace and the charm of a 19th-century mansion in its own grounds with a lake. Unusually, the kitchens are visible, and serve imaginative classic cuisine. The varied menu includes regional dishes. A popular destination with visitors from the UK; reserve ahead.

AMIENS Le Pré Porus €€

95 rue de Voyelle, 80000 ***Tel*** *03 22 46 25 03*

Attractive and popular riverside restaurant by the Somme. The very varied menu specializes in all sorts of fish dishes as well as grilled meat according to the season and panfried *foie gras* with mango. A good place to stop for lunch while visiting the nearby historic Roman waterways and market gardens.

AMIENS L'Aubergade €€€€€

78 rte Nationale, 80480 ***Tel*** *03 22 89 51 41* ***Fax*** *03 22 95 44 05*

Mediterranean-looking restaurant run by Eric Boutte, a young chef who won his first star and is making a name for himself. After working in top Paris restaurants, he returned to Amiens with a vision for his restaurant. His favorite ingredient is duck. Other dishes include panfried scallops with *foie gras* and lime soufflé with prunes.

ARRAS La Faisanderie €€€

45 grand place, 62000 ***Tel*** *03 21 48 20 76*

Also on the magnificent Grand Place, with its spectacular scrolled gable façades, this restaurant is housed in a 17th-century building with a splendid brick vaulted dining room. The cuisine is dictated by what the chef finds at the market. The best of several restaurants on the square, by far.

BERGUES Le Bruegel €

1 rue du Marché aux Fromages, 59380 ***Tel*** *03 28 68 19 19* ***Fax*** *03 28 68 67 12*

Bergues is just outside Dunkirk and is a pleasant surprise. This is a very popular restaurant for families, with long tables and waiters in medieval dress. The picturesque building by the canal dates from 1597, when Spain ruled Flanders. Pork cheeks and lentils and other Flemish dishes with beer are the order of the day.

BOULOGNE-SUR-MER La Matelote €€€€

80 bd Ste Beuve, 62200 ***Tel*** *03 21 30 17 97* ***Fax*** *03 21 83 29 24*

One of the rising gastronomic stars, this is a top-notch seafood restaurant on the seafront, opposite the National Marine center. The interior is fancy, with sea-going ornaments and a red-and-gold Louis XVI motif. Try the warm lobster with artichoke hearts and basil or monkfish in parmesan.

CALAIS Histoire Ancienne €€

20 rue Royale, 62100 ***Tel*** *03 21 34 11 20* ***Fax*** *03 21 96 19 58*

This is a modernized restaurant that has managed to preserve its image as an old-fashioned bistro, with a zinc counter and the old-style bench seating. It is located opposite the Parc Richelieu. The well prepared menu is split between grilled meats and traditional local dishes.

CALAIS Le Channel €€

3 bd de la Résistance, 62100 ***Tel*** *03 21 34 42 30* ***Fax*** *03 21 97 42 43*

A good fish restaurant right next to the harbor, the yacht club, and the Bassin du Paradis, with a fine view of the boats coming and going. The restaurant is bright and nicely decorated with painted woodwork. It has a wine list to be proud of. An ideal spot to wait for the ferry.

CAMBRAI L'Eau à la bouche €

6 rue de Douai, 59400 ***Tel*** *03 27 37 56 25*

This one time cobbler's store turned café offers cheap, simple, and tasty food, which is all produced on the premises. The menu is written on a blackboard and includes tripe, stews, and other local dishes. The service is very friendly, and in summer you can eat outside by the River Escaut.

CASSEL Estaminet T'Kasteel Hof €

Rue St-Nicolas, 59670 ***Tel*** *03 28 40 59 29*

There are sweeping views of the flat countryside from this Flemish-style *estaminet* (no-frills café) which serves local dishes, often with local cheeses, accompanied by beer. It was at Cassel that the "Grand Old Duke of York," son of George III, marched his 10,000 men up to the top of the hill (as popularized in a British song).

COMPIEGNE Bistro des Arts €

35 cours Guynemer, 60200 ***Tel*** *03 44 20 10 10* ***Fax*** *03 44 20 61 01*

A lively bistro serving sophisticated, good-value fare. Located in the center of town, with an artistic atmosphere. Chairs and red leather benches, but no tablecloths. Each day's menu is put up on the slate according to the market. The cuisine is traditional French, and usually includes a meat and a fish dish.

COMPIEGNE Alain Blot €€€€

2 rue Maréchal Foch, Rethondes, 60153 ***Tel*** *03 44 85 60 24* ***Fax*** *03 44 85 92 35*

The proprietor's motto is that seafood should be "a simple expression of the sea." This starred restaurant, with a delightful dining room and veranda opening onto an immaculate garden, is known for its range of classic dishes, such as grilled bass with caramelized red onion. Reserve ahead.

DOUAI La Terrasse €€€

36 terrasse St-Pierre, 59500 ***Tel*** *03 27 88 70 04* ***Fax*** *03 27 88 36 05*

An excellent hotel and restaurant in a lane next to the Collégiale St Pierre, with an extensive wine list of over 1,000 references. The opulent restaurant is decorated with paintings. Try the chef's inspiration – smoked salmon stuffed with asparagus and grilled scallops with blood sausage.

DUNKIRK Estaminet Flamand €

6 rue des Fusiliers-Marins, 59140 ***Tel*** *03 28 66 98 35*

Having suffered from many wars, Dunkirk is not a scenic tourist destination. It has, however, retained its culinary traditions, exemplified here in this pleasant *estaminet* (simple café). Delicious and authentic Flemish cuisine including marrow bones, *Maroilles* cheese, beer tart, and sugar tart.

DUNKIRK L'Estouffade €€

2 quai de la Citadelle, 80000 ***Tel*** *03 28 63 92 78* ***Fax*** *03 28 63 92 78*

A small, popular restaurant specializing in seafood, with views of the port. In summer there is a quiet terrace onto the quay that runs alongside the commercial basin. Turbot is a specialty here. Desserts include chocolate and fruit specialties.

DURY LES AMIENS La Bonne Auberge €€

63 rte Nationale, Dury, 80480 ***Tel*** *03 22 95 03 33*

This bright and fresh-looking restaurant is much decorated with flowers in the summer. The modestly priced menu varies daily, according to the offerings at the market and the inspiration of the chef. Fish dishes are a regular feature of La Bonne Auberge.

LILLE Au bout des doigts €

5 rue St-Joseph, 59000 ***Tel*** *03 20 74 55 95*

A different concept for the French in dining out, meals at this restaurant comprise a selection of 8–10 small dishes. There are no knives and you can eat with your fingers. The cooking is based on mixing flavors, and the wine is drawn from all over the world. The decor is contemporary.

LILLE La Ducasse €

95 rue de Solferino, 59000 ***Tel*** *03 20 57 34 10*

This traditional brasserie in the lively Halles district is something of an institution in Lille. Regional cuisine and beer from a local microbrewery are the highlights, but there is also a mechanical musical box and an accordionist who plays on Friday evenings for the diners who like to sing. Choose a table on the terrace in fine weather.

LILLE Le Compostelle €€

4 rue Saint-Etienne, 59800 ***Tel*** *03 28 38 08 30* ***Fax*** *03 28 38 08 39*

Just off the Grand Place is this former 16th-century hostel on the route to the shrine of St-Jacques de Compostelle (Santiago de Compostela) in northwest Spain. Today the hostel combines old-fashioned charm with contemporary decor. The chef provides a nice blend of regional and traditional cuisine.

MONTREUIL-SUR-MER Auberge de la Grenouillère €€€€€

Rue de la Grenouillère, La Madeleine-sous-Montreuil ***Tel*** *03 21 06 07 22* ***Fax*** *03 21 86 36 36*

Three kilometers from Montreuil, this Picardy farm on the banks of the Canche is furnished traditionally with copper, antique sideboards, and wall paintings of frogs enjoying a good meal. The modern menu is backed up by a good wine list. Tasty crayfish and frogs' legs. The restaurant gained its first Michelin star in 2008.

POIX DE PICARDIE L'Auberge de la Forge €€

14 rue du 49ème Régiment BCA, Caulières, 80290 ***Tel*** *03 22 38 00 91* ***Fax*** *03 22 38 08 48*

A former staging post on the way from Amiens to Neufchatel, this half-timbered Picardy inn serves old-fashioned hearty fare. The restaurant is stylish and attractive. The chef's specialty is duck, in various forms. The *endives gratinées*, ham with *Maroilles* cheese, and endive and scallops are also good.

RECQUES-SUR-HEM Château de Cocove €€€

Av de Cocove ***Tel*** *03 21 82 68 29* ***Fax*** *03 21 82 72 59*

This fine 18th-century château, halfway between Calais and St-Omer, is a real rural retreat. Napoleon had parties here while waiting to invade England. The restaurant is in the beautifully restored old stone stables. Trays of shellfish can be specially prepared if ordered in advance.

ROEUX Le Grand Bleu €€

41 rue Henri-Robert, 62118 ***Tel*** *03 21 55 41 74*

A wooden chalet houses this popular establishment where fish dishes, such as turbot with aubergine (eggplant) fries, are the specialty. Wine is served either by the glass or by the bottle. Choose a window table and enjoy the view of Le Grand Bleu lake, which turns a beautiful shade of blue in the sunshine.

ROYE La Flamiche €€€€

20 pl de l'Hôtel de Ville, 80700 ***Tel*** *03 22 87 00 56* ***Fax*** *03 22 78 46 77*

Known as a prestige gastronomic restaurant throughout the area (with a Michelin star since 1964), Madame Klopp has run this impeccable establishment for many years. Try the panfried scallops, the tajine of Somme eels, or local *flamiche* with leeks. The dining room is filled with an exhibition of sculpture and paintings.

SANGATTE Les Dunes €€

Rte Nationale 48, Blériot Plage, 62231 ***Tel*** *03 21 34 54 30* ***Fax*** *03 21 97 17 43*

This hotel and restaurant is located at Blériot Plage where, in 1909, an intrepid Frenchman set out on his successful attempt to be the first man to cross the Channel in powered flight. Today this is very handy for the Channel Tunnel. Great seafood: try the cassoulet of mussels.

SARS-POTERIES L'Auberge Fleurie €€€€

67 rue Général de Gaulle, 59216 ***Tel*** *03 27 61 62 48* ***Fax*** *03 27 61 56 66*

This grand farmhouse with pretty gardens has been converted into a restaurant serving classic French cooking at its best. The pike-perch on a bed of cabbage and bacon is good, as is the shellfish. In winter, venison, wild boar, and partridge feature regularly on the menu.

STEENVOORDE Auprès de mon Arbre €€

932 rte d'Ecke, 59114 ***Tel*** *03 28 49 79 49*

In this town, famous for its carnival giants that parade each year through the center, and for its church steeple with its high belfry, this restaurant is well regarded. The owner was the chef at a well-known Lille restaurant before settling here in the late 1990s. Classic French as well as traditional Flemish cuisine.

ST-QUENTIN Le Vert Gouteille €€

80 rue d'Isle, 2100 ***Tel*** *03 23 05 13 25*

The two sections of this bistro-style restaurant are separated by the kitchen so diners can see their food being prepared. Traditional dishes are served according to the market produce available on the day; specialties from Lyon are favored. There is also a terrace at the back away from the traffic.

WIMEREUX Hôtel Atlantique €€

Digue de mer, 1st floor, 62930 ***Tel*** *O3 21 32 41 01* ***Fax*** *03 21 87 46 17*

Right on the promenade, with a great view of the sea, as you would expect. The chef Alain Delpierre comes as something of a surprise in this old-fashioned setting. Red mullet in a salad with balsamic vinegar is one specialty. There are also 18 refurbished guest rooms – ask for one facing the Channel.

CHAMPAGNE

AIX-EN-OTHE Auberge de la Scierie €€

La Vove, 10160 ***Tel*** *03 25 46 71 26.* ***Fax*** *03 25 46 65 69*

Auberge de la Scierie is run by a Franco-Australian-British couple, who worked together at the Savoy in London, and together speak five languages. They specialize in shellfish with a distinctly Oriental flavor. This auberge, set in 8 acres of grounds with a swimming pool, also has guest rooms, and cooking courses are offered.

AMBONNAY Auberge Saint-Vincent €€€

1 rue St Vincent, 51150 ***Tel*** *03 26 57 01 98* ***Fax*** *03 26 57 81 48*

This attractive 17th-century auberge, in a village on the edge of the beautiful Parc Régional de la Montagne de Champagne et de Reims, has a chimney decorated with antique kitchen implements. Modern local dishes are served here, and guest rooms are available.

ARSONVAL Hostellerie de la Chaumière €€

Arsonval, 10200 ***Tel*** *03 25 27 91 02* ***Fax*** *03 25 27 90 26*

For many years now this hospitable Anglo-French couple have been welcoming guests to their restaurant and hotel overlooking the Aube. It is close to the route de Champagne. Dishes include homemade *foie gras*, and some of the best kidneys and bacon in France. Rustic dining room with wooden beams.

BAR-SUR-AUBE Le Cellier aux Moines €

Rue Général Vouillemont, 10200 ***Tel*** *03 25 27 08 01* ***Fax*** *03 25 01 56 22*

As the name implies, this huge 12th-century cellar in the center of this pleasant old town (once the main route to Switzerland) has been converted into a restaurant with a vineyard theme. The staff wear *vignerons'* outfits for groups. Try the *andouillette* (tripe sausage) with excellent local Chaource cheese.

BREVONNES Au Vieux Logis €€

1 rue de Piney, 10220 ***Tel*** *03 25 46 30 17*

This first-class restaurant is part of a completely refurbished traditional hotel. The menu features classic French cuisine, including dishes such as snails in garlic cream with local Chaource cheese. This is a good choice for those visiting the artificial lakes nearby as well as the Fôret de L'Orient.

CHALONS-EN-CHAMPAGNE Les Temps Changent €

1 rue Garinet, 51000 ***Tel*** *03 26 66 41 09*

Head to the Hôtel d'Angleterre in the town center to dine at this popular bistro. There is a different menu every day that focuses on seasonal produce. Try the roast shoulder of lamb with basil or the delicious passion fruit soufflé accompanied by wine served either by the glass or bottle.

CHALONS-EN-CHAMPAGNE Au Carillon Gourmand €€

15 bis pl Monseigneur Tissier, 51000 ***Tel*** *03 26 64 45 07* ***Fax*** *03 26 21 06 09*

In the center of the old town in the Notre-Dame-de-Vaux quarter, this welcoming restaurant has a pleasant covered terrace that opens onto the street. The *plat du jour* (dish of the day) is chosen according to what is best at the market. Try carpaccio of salmon or spiced duck pâté.

CHAUMONT Les Remparts
P 🚸 ☰ ♿ ⛱ €€

72 rue de Verdun, 52000 ***Tel*** *03 25 32 64 40*

This completely renovated coaching inn has a restaurant, brasserie, and hotel all on-site. The restaurant specializes in dishes that include truffles and the local Langres cheese. Much cheaper meals are available in the Brasserie 1-2-3, located in the same building. Both restaurants look out over the attractive grounds.

COMBEAUFONTAINE Le Balcon
P 🚸 €€€

1 pl 15 Juin 1940, 70120 ***Tel*** *03 84 92 11 13* ***Fax*** *03 84 92 15 89*

This good old-fashioned provincial restaurant, half an hour from Langres, deserves recognition. Try the chef's recommendation – the *menu gourmand* – and you will come away more than satisfied in body and wallet. The brasserie offers good weekday lunches. Rooms are also available.

EPERNAY La Table Kobus
🚸 ☰ €€

3 rue Dr Rousseau, 51200 ***Tel*** *03 26 51 53 53* ***Fax*** *03 26 58 42 68*

An excellent brasserie near the center of this town that is all about champagne. Uniquely, you can bring your own bottle of champagne to drink with your meal. The menu is classic French cuisine. The homemade terrine of *foie gras fait maison* is particularly recommended.

FOUCHERES Auberge de la Seine
P 🚸 ⛱ 🍷 €€

1 faubourg de Bourgogne, 10260 ***Tel*** *03 25 40 71 11* ***Fax*** *03 25 40 84 09*

A picturereserve posting inn halfway between the Côte des Bar and the Champagne vineyards. The restaurant in Louis XIII-style opens onto a pretty riverside terrace. The chef, who has run the kitchens of other starred restaurants in the area, specializes in lobster.

JOINVILLE Le Soleil d'Or
P 🚸 ☰ ⛱ 🍸 🍷 €€

9 rue Capucins, 52300 ***Tel*** *03 25 94 15 66* ***Fax*** *03 25 94 39 02*

This 17th-century house, with elegant guest rooms and a restaurant, was the home of the Guise family. The dining room is decorated with statues from a 14th-century convent, and there is an agreeable covered terrace. An original menu changes every day.

LANGRES La Pignata
🚸 €

59 rue Diderot, 52200 ***Tel*** *03 25 87 63 70*

Italian restaurant serving pizzas and other tasty dishes, such as veal with Milanese sauce or seafood tagliatelle, with house wine. It is located in the center of this historic fortress town. Wander the old cramped streets and try to spot the first barracks allocated to the Foreign Legion, in 1832.

LANGRES L'Auberge des Voiliers
P 🚸 ☰ ⛱ €€

Lac de la Liez, 52000 ***Tel*** *03 25 87 05 74*

Hidden away from the historic city of Langres, this auberge overlooks a good-sized lake with views of the city walls. The main restaurant serves "modernized" traditional dishes – *foie gras* with rhubarb or fillet of pike with nettle soufflé. There is also a cheaper brasserie if you prefer more simple cuisine.

LE MESNIL-SUR-OGER Le Mesnil
🚸 ☰ ♿ 🍷 €€

2 rue Pasteur, 51190 ***Tel*** *03 26 57 95 57* ***Fax*** *03 26 57 78 57*

In a pretty wine-growing village in the heart of the Champagne vineyards is this gourmet restaurant, set in an attractive old house. The restaurant owner is happy to show patrons around his fine wine cellars. The village is the home of the museum of the vine and wine in the Maison Launois.

L'EPINE Aux Armes de Champagne
P 🚸 ⛱ 🍸 🍷 €€€€

31 av de Luxembourg, 51460 ***Tel*** *03 26 69 30 30* ***Fax*** *03 26 69 30 26*

A top-class establishment, with a restaurant and hotel rooms, next to the majestic 15th-century basilique Notre Dame. Classic French cuisine is prepared with vegetables from the restaurant's garden, such as asparagus with truffle sauce and flakes of *foie gras* or lobster with apricots. Good vegetarian selection.

NOGENT-SUR-SEINE Au Beau Rivage
P 🚸 ♿ ⛱ €€€

20 rue Villiers-aux-Choux, 10400 ***Tel*** *03 25 39 84 22* ***Fax*** *03 25 39 18 32*

This riverside hotel and restaurant comes highly recommended, particularly since the bedrooms have been refurbished. An attractive terrace looks out from the dining room onto the Seine. French traditional *cuisine gastronomique*, with *foie gras* and rabbit on a menu that will make your mouth water.

REIMS La Brasserie Boulingrin
🚸 ☰ ⛱ 🍷 €€

48 rue Mars, 51100 ***Tel*** *03 26 40 96 22* ***Fax*** *03 26 40 03 92*

This famous Reims brasserie and a regular meeting place for locals has kept its Art Deco mosaics of jolly grape harvesters *vendangeurs en Champagne*. Good value and a lively place to dine, near the covered market. Oysters and *steak tartare* are specialties. There is also a large selection of champagnes.

REIMS Le Café du Palais
🚸 ⛱ 🍷 €€

14 pl Myron Herrick, 51100 ***Tel*** *03 26 47 52 54*

An Aladdin's cave of paintings, photos, and a famous Art-Deco, stained-glass roof by Jacques Simon have been assembled over the years by owner Jean-Louis Vogt. This is a much-loved family run brasserie in the heart of Reims, which has been in existence since 1930. Excellent main dishes, great desserts, and a fine selection of champagne.

REIMS L'Assiette Champenoise P 🧒 ☰ ♿ ⛱ 🍸 🍷 €€€€

40 av Paul Vaillant-Couturier, Tinqueux, 51430 ***Tel*** *03 26 84 64 64* ***Fax*** *03 26 04 15 69*

A rising gastronomic star which is reflected in the price. Lobster dishes are a specialty, and pigeon and lamb are other favorites. Housed in an elegant *maison de maitre*, the restaurant now has two rosettes, and the hotel has been extended and modernized. Attractions include a beautiful flower garden and a pleasing terrace.

ROCROI Hôtel-Restaurant le Commerce 🧒 ⛱ €

5 pl d'Armes, 08230 ***Tel*** *03 24 54 11 15* ***Fax*** *03 24 54 95 31*

This pleasantly old-fashioned, good-value restaurant in the central square of an amazingly well preserved and unique star-shaped fortress rebuilt by Vauban in 1675. It serves traditional and local dishes such as *escargots*, *coq au vin*, or rabbit in cider, and for dessert *île flottante* (poached meringues), chocolate mousse, or *profiteroles*.

SIGNY LE PETIT Au Lion d'Or P 🧒 ♿ €€

Pl de l'Eglise, 08380 ***Tel*** *03 24 53 51 76* ***Fax*** *03 24 53 36 96*

On the circuit of fortified churches, this restaurant and hotel is housed behind an 18th-century red-brick façade. The nonsmoking Louis XIII restaurant serves a delicious *foie gras* with a wild rose jam. Skilfully prepared fish is another specialty of this well-run dining establishment.

ST IMOGES La Maison du Vigneron P 🧒 ♿ ⛱ 🍷 €€€

Rte Nationale 51, 51160 ***Tel*** *03 26 52 88 00* ***Fax*** *03 26 52 86 03*

Between Reims and Epernay, in a village in the heart of the Parc Régionale de la Montagne Noire et de Reims, is this good restaurant and Champagne house. Excellent regional dishes imaginatively prepared and, if you wish, accompanied by the owner's Champagne vintages.

STE MENEHOULD Le Cheval Rouge 🧒 ♿ ⛱ 🍷 €€

1 rue Chanzy, 51800 ***Tel*** *03 26 60 81 04* ***Fax*** *03 26 60 93 11*

Two places to eat in one establishment: the restaurant, with its distinctive fireplace, or in the much cheaper brasserie, which specializes in pigs' trotters. Monsieur Fourreau, the owner of the establishment, sends pigs' trotters all over Europe.

TROYES Au Jardin Gourmand 🧒 ⛱ €

31 rue Paillot de Montabert, 10000 ***Tel*** *03 25 73 36 13* ***Fax*** *03 25 73 36 13*

In the heart of the old town, with its forest of half-timbered houses, this charming restaurant quietly pleases all who come here. The specialty is the local delicacy, *andouillette* (tripe sausage). Pleasant small paneled dining room and delightful terrace for eating out in summer. Try the lavender ice cream.

TROYES Les Crieurs de Vin 🧒 🍷 €

4 pl Jean Jaurès, 10000 ***Tel*** *03 25 40 01 01*

An inexpensive wine bar with an agreeably raffish air run by two wine fanatics. In the front they sell wine to take out, and in the back they sell it to accompany their bistro-style menu. Lots of exposed beams and bare wooden tables. The traditional French menu is on a blackboard.

TROYES Tartines et Bulles 🧒 €

31 rue de la Cité, 10000 ***Tel*** *03 25 80 58 23*

In attractive premises and under new ownership with a new name, this restaurant uses local produce to turn out good, cheap dishes. The specialty is *tartines gratinées* (toasted sandwiches) made with local Chaource cheese. There are copious salads, too. Wine is served by the glass or jug and there's a choice of two champagnes by the glass.

VILLEMOYENNE Parentele P 🧒 ☰ ♿ ⛱ 🍷 €€€

32 rue Marcelin Lévêque, 10260 ***Tel*** *03 25 43 68 68* ***Fax*** *03 25 43 68 69*

This restaurant is making a name for itself with crayfish cooked in coconut cream and ravioli *au foie gras*. In a short time the owners, two brothers who took over the family business, won their first Michelin star. Experts say the Champagne wine list is perfect.

ALSACE & LORRAINE

BAERENTHAL L'Arnsbourg P 🧒 ☰ 🍸 🍷 €€€€

18 untermuhlthal, 57230 ***Tel*** *03 87 06 50 85* ***Fax*** *03 87 06 57 67*

One of the few three-rosette restaurants in France, hidden in a pretty glade in the forest of the northern Vosges. Brother and sister team Jean-Georges and Cathy Klein conjure up light, imaginative dishes, such as *grillade de foie gras* of duck with crystalized lemon, accompanied by great wines. There is now a small hotel, too.

BITCHE Le Strasbourg P 🧒 ☰ ⛱ €€

24 rue Col. Teyssier, 57230 ***Tel*** *03 87 96 00 44* ***Fax*** *03 87 96 11 57*

Excellent hotel restaurant in the shadow of Vauban's fascinating citadelle, which contains a memorial to the American infantry that liberated the town. Le Strasbourg has a big traditional dining room, with a beautiful white molded fireplace. The cuisine here is traditional, with *foie gras* and a range of fish dishes.

COLMAR La Table de Louise

☰ ♿ ⛱ €€

2 rue Edouard-Richard, 68000 ***Tel*** *03 89 24 00 00*

Austere but fashionable decor in this attractive brasserie brings a touch of 1900s Parisian style to comfortable, old-fashioned Colmar. The wide ranging traditional menu includes terrine of goose *foie gras* with pumpkin chutney. Situated just two-minutes from the very beautiful half-timbered Renaissance town center.

COLMAR Le Caveau de St Pierre

🚸 ♿ ⛱ €€

24 rue de la Herse, 68000 ***Tel*** *03 89 41 99 33*

Built in 1568 into the medieval fortifications, this restaurant stands in the Little Venice quarter, reached by a boardwalk along the canal. Warm traditional decor with painted beams. Specialties include fillet of beef cooked in a sauce of local Munster cheese, fish dishes, and *choucroute* (pickled cabbage served with sausage and bacon).

GIMBELHOF Restaurant au Gimbelhof

🚸 ⛱ €

Rte Forestière, 67510 ***Tel*** *03 88 94 43 58*

Upgraded Alsacien farm lost in the hills right on the German frontier, 6 miles (10 km) north of Lembach and only an hour from Strasbourg. Across the valley is the magnificent ruined château de Fleckenstein. Excellent local dishes. This very professional and modestly priced establishment is well supported by both Germans and locals. Reserve ahead.

ILLHAEUSERN L'Auberge de l'Ill

🚸 ☰ ♿ ⛱ 🍸 🍷 €€€€

2 rue de Collonges, 68970 ***Tel*** *03 89 71 89 00* ***Fax*** *03 89 71 82 83*

The Mecca of Alsacien cuisine, and still a Haeberlin family affair, this restaurant has held three rosettes for 40 years! Set on the banks of the river Ill in the heart of the village, with gardens and storks nesting. Lobster "Prince Vladimir," salmon souflé, terrine of goose *foie gras* with truffles.

KAYSERSBERG Restaurant Saint Alexis

P 🚸 ⛱ €

Restaurant Saint Alexis, 68240 ***Tel*** *03 89 73 90 38*

Hidden in the hills above the vineyards of Kaysersberg and Riquewihr, this old farm, set in cherry orchards near a chapel dating in part from the 5th century, houses a popular restaurant. Every menu starts with soup, followed by meat pie or stewed cockerel or game and omelet. Reserve ahead.

KAYSERSBERG Au Lion d'Or

🚸 ⛱ 🍷 €€

66 rue Général de Gaulle, 68240 ***Tel*** *03 89 47 11 16* ***Fax*** *03 89 47 19 02*

Right in the old town, a lot of history surrounds this excellent, unpretentious institution built in 1521 and run by the same family since 1724. A carved lion's head decorates the door into the restaurant. The characterful dining room has a big open fire in winter. Traditional dishes include wild game, *foie gras*, and sauerkraut.

LEMBACH Auberge du Cheval Blanc

P ☰ ⛱ 🍷 €€€€

4 rue de Wissembourg, 67510 ***Tel*** *03 88 94 41 86* ***Fax*** *03 88 94 20 74*

In an 18th-century coaching inn, this restaurant in the village of Lembach is the best in the north of Alsace. The owner was the Gault Millau's most promising chef 2009 and serves truly excellent traditional regional dishes as well as the best French haute cuisine. Cheaper set menus are also available.

LES THONS Le Couvent des Cordeliers

P 🚸 €

Les Thons, 88410 ***Tel*** *03 29 07 90 84*

A fine ramshackle collection of 15th-century monastery buildings north of Renaissance Châtillon-sur-Saône is home to this unusual restaurant. The owner roasts slices of gammon over an open fire. Very popular; reserve ahead and ask to be seated downstairs, *"en bas."* There is a free museum.

MARLENHEIM Le Cerf

P 🚸 ☰ ⛱ 🍷 €€€€

30 rue Général de Gaulle, 67520 ***Tel*** *03 88 87 73 73* ***Fax*** *03 88 87 68 08*

At the northern end of the Route des Vins, this old coaching inn, owned by the same family since 1930, serves modernized traditional Alsace dishes. It has a reputation for serving a good square meal, even second helpings. *Choucroute* with suckling pig and panfried *foie gras*. Rooms available.

METZ Le Bistrot des Sommeliers

🚸 ☰ ⛱ 🍷 €

10 rue Pasteur, 57000 ***Tel*** *03 87 63 40 20* ***Fax*** *03 87 63 54 46*

A gastronomic experience wrapped up in brasserie clothing. The chef was formerly second in one of France's top restaurants. The wine list is outstanding, with 400 different labels covering the whole country. Excellent bistro-style food, with a mostly business clientele. Crayfish *vol au vent* is a specialty.

METZ Restaurant des Roches

🚸 ⛱ €€

29 rue Roches, 57000 ***Tel*** *03 87 74 06 51* ***Fax*** *03 87 75 40 04*

Set on the ground floor of an 18th-century building opposite France's oldest theater, this restaurant specializes in fish – bass, daurade and turbot – and shellfish. You can pick your own live lobster from the glass tank. In summer there is a terrace for dining alongside the Moselle.

NANCY Chez Tanesy

🚸 ☰ ♿ ⛱ 🍷 €€

223 Grande Rue, 54000 ***Tel*** *03 83 35 51 94*

A discreet 18th-century façade conceals what is reputed to be the best restaurant in Nancy and certainly the most reasonably priced. The restaurant is named after the well-known local chef who owns and runs the establishment. Coquilles St Jacques with truffle sauce is recommended. Close to Place Stanislas.

NANCY L’Excelsior 🚸 ☰ €€

50 rue Henri Poincaré, 54000 ***Tel*** *03 83 35 24 57*

This classic Nancy brasserie with Belle Epoque decor and stained-glass windows is a famous rendezvous. Excellent service, and you can even reserve your table over the Internet if you are clever enough. L’Excelsior serves refined dishes with *foie gras* and *choucroute garnie*.

OBERNAI La Cloche P 🚸 ☰ €

90 rue Général Gouraud, 67210 ***Tel*** *03 88 49 90 43*

In a 14th-century house with original paneling and windows, is this tavern-style restaurant. Located in the heart of the old town, it offers traditional Alsace cuisine with Munster cheese in the sauces. Always two different fish on the menu, and *tarte flambée* in the evenings. Excellent service. Reserve ahead.

RIEDISHEIM Restaurant de la Poste P 🚸 ☰ €€€€

7 rue Général de Gaulle, Riedisheim, 68400 ***Tel*** *03 89 44 07 71* ***Fax*** *03 89 64 32 79*

A coaching inn since 1850, six generations of the Kieny family have maintained this restaurant with its elegant dining rooms. You will find traditional Alsace cooking with suckling pig a specialty, according to the season. They are also great experts in cooking with chocolate.

RIQUEWIHR Le Sarment d’Or P 🚸 €€€

4 rue du Cerf, 68340 ***Tel*** *03 89 86 02 86* ***Fax*** *03 89 47 99 23*

In a beautiful 16th-century house, tucked away in a quiet Renaissance street of this wonderfully preserved village, this restaurant’s beamed dining room is elegantly decorated. The cooking combines invention and tradition. Warm *kugelhopf* cake for breakfast from the family store just nearby. Rooms available.

SAVERNE Taverne Katz P 🚸 €€

80 grand rue, 67700 ***Tel*** *03 88 71 16 56*

In the center of the town opposite the huge château, this taverne was built in 1605 and is still beautifully preserved inside and out with a traditonal flowered terrace and polished wood in the dining room. The food is French with a regional slant, and includes duck with *foie gras* and medallions of rabbit.

STRASBOURG Pâtisserie Winter 🚸 €

25 rue du 22 Novembre, 67000 ***Tel*** *03 88 32 85 40* ***Fax*** *03 88 32 85 40*

This is a good place for the ordinary visitor to Strasbourg, who does not have the expense account of a Member of the European Parliament. Simple meals at reasonable prices at this location in the city center. Good salads and *pâtisseries* with beer or wine.

STRASBOURG Au Crocodile P 🚸 ☰ €€€€€

10 rue Outre, 67000 ***Tel*** *03 88 32 13 02* ***Fax*** *03 88 75 72 01*

One of the finest restaurants in France’s other capital. Splendid polished woodwork, elegant decor, and the famous crocodile brought back from a campaign in Egypt by an Alsatian Captain in the French army. Super service and light, original cusine. A truly great wine list that covers the world.

VERDUN Hostellerie le Coq Hardi P 🚸 ♿ €€€€

Av de la Victoire, 55100 ***Tel*** *03 29 86 36 36* ***Fax*** *03 29 86 09 21*

This traditional, classic French provincial hotel and restaurant has good food, a great wine list, and an elegant dining room. Try the langoustine lasagne and snails. The bistro option provides cheaper, quick meals, such as steak and fries. There is a pleasant summer terrace.

WINDSTEIN Auberge de la Faveur P 🚸 €

33 rue des Châteaux, 67110 ***Tel*** *03 88 09 24 41*

An exceptional little hotel-restaurant between two ruined medieval castles in the regional park, run by two sculptors. On the D53 between Jaegerthal and Dambach turn up the valley of the Windstein and keep going until you get to the top. The rooms have been refurbished, the food is good, and there are great views. Closed Dec–Jan.

WISSEMBOURG Daniel Rebert 🚸 ☰ €

7 pl du Marché aux Choux, 67100 ***Tel*** *03 88 94 01 66* ***Fax*** *03 88 54 38 78*

Daniel Rebert is one of the best chocolatiers and pâtissiers in France. In the shadow of his luxury production of cakes and chocolates there is a discreet *salon de thé*, serving light lunches. Afterwards, you can choose the cakes and chocolates from the dizzying display to take home.

NORMANDY

ACQUIGNY Hostellerie d’Acquigny 🚸 €€€

1 rue d’Evreux, 27400 ***Tel*** *02 32 50 20 05*

This former coaching inn houses a charming restaurant. The regulars appreciate the inexpensive set menus, but it is worth choosing *à la carte*: terrine of *foie gras* with a mango chutney or cod steak served with a sardine butter are both good choices. Expect an eclectic wine list and animated service.

ALENCON Le Bistrot 🚸 ☰ ♿ ⛱ €

21 rue de Sarthe, 61000 ***Tel*** *02 33 26 51 69*

Classic French bistro with the distinctive old-fashioned, green-painted front, red-checkered tablecloths, and old movie posters. The regularly changing menu includes blood sausage and *fillet mignon* of pork in cream, which are local favorites. A well-stocked, sensibly priced wine list complements the food.

AUMALE La Villa des Houx P 🚸 ♿ ⛱ €€

6 av Général de Gaulle, 76390 ***Tel*** *02 35 93 93 30* ***Fax*** *02 35 93 03 94*

A former *gendarmerie* (police station), this is an ideal place to stop along the route from Rouen to Amiens. The menu offers the refined taste of real Normandy cuisine. In the rustic dining room try the apricot *foie gras* for appetizers, followed by boned quail cooked in a salt crust and Calvados soufflé.

BAYEUX La Coline d'Enzo 🚸 ⛱ €€

4 rue des Bouchers, 14400 ***Tel*** *02 31 92 03 01*

The focus here is on fish: sea bass cooked in clay is a specialty. At lunch time opt for the *foie gras suggestion du jour*, which is particularly good value. Instead of the cheese board try roasted goat's cheese with tomato. The restaurant has a modern feel with bright decor that successfully combines the old with the the new. Reserve ahead.

BRIQUEVILLE-SUR-MER L'Auberge de la Maison Blanche P 🚸 ♿ €€

D20, 50290 ***Tel*** *02 33 61 65 62*

The coastal location of this restaurant, north of Granville, dictates the menu of fresh fish and shellfish – the local sea whelks are the specialty. Surprising but delicious combinations are prepared by the excellent chef, such as skate with Camembert cheese. Local lamb is a specialty.

CAEN Le Pressoir 🚸 ☰ ⛱ 🍷 €€€€

3 ave Henri-Chéron, 14000 ***Tel*** *02 31 73 32 71* ***Fax*** *02 31 26 76 64*

Award-winning chef Ivan Vautier and his wife Sandrine run this excellent, contemporary restaurant that uses the best local ingredients in an innovative take on Norman cuisine. The à la carte menu offers a wide range of dishes and there are sensibly priced set menus, too. Closed Mon, Sat lunch, Sun dinner, Feb school hols & Jul 23–Aug 21.

CARTERET Marine P 🚸 ⛱ 🍷 €€€€

11 rue de Paris, 50270 ***Tel*** *02 33 53 83 31* ***Fax*** *02 33 53 39 60*

At this restaurant, near the port, chef Laurent Cesne prepares inventive dishes such as langoustine "pizza," lobster soup with coconut milk, and roast lamb with a herb crust. Modern, comfortable dining room; precise and attentive service. Wine list matches food.

CHERBOURG Le Faitout 🚸 €€

25 rue Tour-Carrée, 50100 ***Tel*** *02 33 04 25 04* ***Fax*** *02 33 04 60 36*

A bastion of tradition, Le Faitout is located in an old quarter of the city. This animated bistro-style restaurant serves family-style dishes *par excellence*. Sample the delicious red mullet, fresh Barfleur mussels, grilled sardines, and a wonderfully crispy confit of duck.

COSQUEVILLE Au Bouquet de Cosqueville 🚸 ♿ ⛱ 🍷 €€

Hameau Remond, 50330 ***Tel*** *02 33 54 32 81* ***Fax*** *02 33 54 63 38*

Good portions of fresh seafood, such as lobster cooked in cider, local fish, and shellfish, served at this elegantly rustic restaurant in an ivy-clad house in the village center. Freshest local produce chosen with care. Tasty crêpes and *crème brulée* for dessert. Impressive wine list.

COURSEILLES SUR MER Paris P 🚸 ⛱ €€

Pl 6-Juin, 14470 ***Tel*** *02 31 37 45 07* ***Fax*** *02 31 37 51 63*

A good-value-for-money restaurant in this relaxed seaside resort, north of Caen, on the Côte Nacre. Friendly service in the simply furnished dining room, where simple seafood and meat dishes are prepared with care. The terrace and veranda outside are protected from the gusty sea breezes.

DEAUVILLE Le Spinnaker ♿ 🍷 €€€

52 rue Mirabeau, 14800 ***Tel*** *02 31 88 24 40* ***Fax*** *02 31 88 43 58*

After a stroll along the seafront promenade, make your way to one of Normandy's finest fish restaurants. An attractive modern dining room specializes in fish and seafood, and also grilled meat dishes. Delicious baked lobster in cider vinegar, or turbot with shallots. Friendly, attentive service.

DIEPPE Bistrot de Pollet 🚸 €€

23 rue Tête de Bœuf, 76200 ***Tel*** *02 35 84 68 57*

Small, friendly bistro-style restaurant with chef's daily suggestions, depending on the catch of the day, in the old fishing quarter of the port. Simple unfussy fish dishes: haddock salad, grilled sardines, poached sole, and bass. Limited selection of wines. Packed with locals and regulars; reserve ahead.

DOMFRONT Auberge Grand Gousier 🚸 €€

1 pl Liberté, 61700 ***Tel*** *02 33 38 97 17* ***Fax*** *02 33 30 89 25*

Domfront escaped destruction during the bombardments of 1944, and this family-run auberge is testimony to this, standing in the medieval town center with its authentic fireplace. The specialty is stuffed seafood and gratin of cockles. The portions are generous and the welcome genuine.

DOZULE Le Pavé d'Auge 🚸 ⛱ 🍷 €€€

Les Halles, Beuvron en Auge, 14430 ***Tel*** *02 31 79 26 71* ***Fax*** *02 31 39 04 45*

The talented chef serves food made from locally sourced produce. The dining room, in the renovated ancient village market hall, has lots of charm. The menus focus on fish, with a small choice of meat and poultry. Choose from Isigny oysters or grilled langoustines, and then braised hake or *rascasse*.

DRUBEC La Haie Tondue P 🚸 ▤ ♿ ⛱ €€€

La Haie Tondue RN175, 14130 ***Tel*** *02 31 64 85 00*

This handsome, old, vine-clad restaurant out in the countryside has an attractive terrace and plenty of Norman beams and half timbering. Authentic, traditional cuisine includes panfried crayfish with aubergine (eggplant) "caviar" and veal with a cheese sauce. Good value for money.

FALAISE l'Attache P 🚸 €€€€

Rte de Caen, 14700 ***Tel*** *02 31 90 05 38* ***Fax*** *02 31 90 57 19*

Reservations recommended for this restaurant in the heart of Calvados. A beautifully renovated former staging post, with the dining room decorated in relaxing tones. The classic repertoire has an added dimension – the chef uses long-forgotten plants and aromatic herbs to flavor his cuisine. Impeccable service. Reservation recommended.

FOURGES Moulin de Fourges P 🚸 ⛱ 🍷 €€€€

38 rue du Moulin, 27630 ***Tel*** *02 32 52 12 12* ***Fax*** *02 32 52 92 56*

A beautiful riverside watermill that would no doubt have pleased Monet, who lived at nearby Giverny. Local produce innovatively used to achieve astonishing results. During the winter months the Moulin is transformed into a mountain chalet-style restaurant serving mainly *fondue*. Pleasant dining area, and decent wines.

GISORS Le Cappeville 🚸 🍷 €€€

17 rue Cappeville, 27410 ***Tel*** *02 32 55 11 08* ***Fax*** *02 32 55 93 92*

Rustic restaurant in the oldest part of town, serving traditional Normandy cuisine. The chef Pierre Potel shows his skill in creating tasty dishes using local produce. Try the succulent veal served with a compote of chicory, or monkfish with beetroot. La Cappeville has a friendly, relaxed atmosphere.

GRANVILLE La Citadelle P 🚸 ▤ ♿ ⛱ €€

34 rue du Port, 50406 ***Tel*** *02 33 50 34 10* ***Fax*** *02 33 50 15 36*

Overlooking the bay of St-Michel, the reliable cooking and the view over the fishing port from the terrace is enough to draw anyone over the bridge. Elegant, modern dining room serves generous portions. The freshest seafood platter in town, the biggest portion of sole, and Norman scallops.

HONFLEUR La Terrace et l'Assiette ⛱ 🍷 €€€€

8 pl Saint-Catherine, 14600 ***Tel*** *02 31 89 31 33* ***Fax*** *02 31 89 90 17*

Attractive traditional timber and brick building with a terrace opposite the church. Wonderfully fresh seafood dishes, lobster omelet, sole, and turbot. Simplicity is the key, using the best produce. Savor the oyster gaspacho and the tartare of *dorade grise* (sea bream). Good white wine selection.

HONFLEUR La Ferme St Siméon ♿ ⛱ 🍸 🍷 €€€€€

Rue A.Marais, 14600 ***Tel*** *02 31 81 78 00* ***Fax*** *02 31 89 48 48*

A luxurious place to eat in this pretty fishing port. The restaurant of this spa hotel is known for dishes such as langoustine with a shellfish *gelée* served with creamed cauliflower. The elegant dining room has an old-world charm and a wonderful beamed ceiling. There is also an excellent wine list.

LA FERRIERE AUX ETANGS Auberge de la Mine P 🚸 ♿ €€€

Le Gué-Plat, 61450 ***Tel*** *02 33 66 91 10* ***Fax*** *02 33 96 73 90*

At this former mine-workers' cantine, traditional Norman dishes are produced with originality, such as veal hock stuffed with Vire *andouille* and roast pollack with herbs. Also, old favorites like a potato *galette* with Livarot cheese. Excellent cheese board and desserts.

LES ANDELYS La Chaine d'Or P 🚸 ♿ ⛱ 🍷 €€€€

27 rue Grande, 27700 ***Tel*** *02 32 54 00 31* ***Fax*** *02 32 54 05 68*

Reserve a table in this restaurant to taste such delicacies as oysters in Champagne sauce, terrine of *foie gras* aromatized with Pommeau, turbot with champagne butter sauce, grilled langoustines, or roast lamb with a herb crust. Romantic setting on the banks of the Seine in an 18th-century auberge. Rooms available.

LOUVIERS Manoir de la Haye le Comte P 🚸 ♿ ⛱ €€€

4 rte de la Haye La Comte, 27400 ***Tel*** *02 32 40 00 40*

A hotel-restaurant *de charme* set in a 16th-century country house with extensive parkland. The restaurant overlooks the grounds with a terrace for the summer and a log fire in winter. Good classic French cuisine with a Normandy bias – try dishes such as duck terrine and *foie gras au torchon*, which is cooked in cheesecloth.

LYONS LA FORET Restaurant de la Halle 🚸 ♿ ⛱ €€

Pl Benserade, 27480 ***Tel*** *02 32 49 49 92*

An attractive, traditional Norman village surrounded by the largest beech forest in Europe merits this good local restaurant, located opposite the ancient market hall. Simple, straightforward, delicious cuisine, especially the lamb cooked with rosemary. Starchy service.

MONT-ST-MICHEL Auberge St Pierre €€

Grande rue, 50170 ***Tel*** *02 33 60 14 03* ***Fax*** *02 33 48 59 82*

Lamb grazed on the surrounding salt marshes, known as *agneau pré salé*, features on the menu in this charming timbered 15th-century building. Seafood is also a house specialty. Try the favorites such as crab or salmon. Fresh local produce is used in the preparation of traditional dishes.

MONT-ST-MICHEL La Mère Poulard €€€€

Grande rue, 50170 ***Tel*** *02 33 89 68 68*

A deluxe brasserie on the famous Mont St-Michel, where visitors come from all over the world to sample the famous omelet Mère Poulard cooked in a long-handled pan over a fire. Also delicious are the *pré-salé* lamb (lamb fed on the surrounding salt marshes), and spit-roasted pig.

PONT AUDEMER Belle Isle sur Risle P €€€€

Belle Isle sur Risle, 27500 ***Tel*** *02 32 56 96 22*

Part of the Relais du Silence chain, this gracious hotel and restaurant is housed in an elegant, ivy-covered, 19th-century gentleman's residence. The menu balances fish and meat dishes and demonstrates an original use of spices. On Saturdays and public holidays a pianist plays while you dine.

PONT L'EVEQUE Auberge de l'Aigle d'Or €€€€

68 rue de Vaucelles, 14130 ***Tel*** *02 31 65 05 25* ***Fax*** *02 31 65 12 03*

A well-maintained 16th-century coaching inn with a pretty courtyard provides an attractive setting for a good-value meal of *escargots Pays d'Auge* and free-range chicken cooked in a cider sauce. The menu changes seasonally and ensures the best local produce. Attentive service.

PONT SAINT-PIERRE Hostellerie La Bonne Marmite €€

10 rue René Raban 27300 ***Tel*** *02 32 49 70 24* ***Fax*** *02 32 48 12 41*

A top Logis de France not too far from Rouen in an old coaching inn. The dining room is as elegant as the building, with a *caisson* ceiling. Try the *foie gras de canard à l'ancienne* and the lobster salad. This is Norman cooking at its best. The wine cellar boasts some fine old Bordeaux.

PUTANGES PONT ECREPIN Hôtel du Lion Verd €€€

Pl de l'Hôtel de Ville, 61210 ***Tel*** *02 33 35 01 86* ***Fax*** *02 33 39 53 32*

This welcoming hotel-restaurant sits on the riverside of the Orme. The menu offers local Normandy produce with pride and a refreshing approach. The result is wonderful: veal sweetbreads with Camembert cream, Auge Valley *cochon de lait* (suckling pig). Good homemade desserts.

ROUEN La Couronne €€€

31 pl Vieux Marché, 76000 ***Tel*** *02 35 71 40 90* ***Fax*** *02 35 71 05 78*

In the oldest auberge in France, dating from 1345, the experienced, talented chef ensures that you pass a memorable moment here with classic gourmet dishes such as *foie gras* with *citron confit*, dried apple and syrup of Pommeau, lobster risotto, and duck *à la Rouennaise*. Great Normandy cheeses.

ROUEN Le 37 €€

37 rue St-Etienne-des-Tonneliers, 76000 ***Tel*** *02 35 70 56 65*

Attractive city-center bistro, chic and zen, presents a cuisine that is a touch more modern than its celebrated parent, Gill. Enjoy savory dishes such as salad of curried prawns and hummus, panfried chicken served with aubergine (eggplant) crumble, and for dessert a caramel tart. Reservations recommended.

ROUEN Restaurant Gill ♿ €€€€

8-9 quai de la Bourse, 76000 ***Tel*** *02 35 71 16 14* ***Fax*** *02 35 71 96 91*

A highly recommended restaurant on the Seine quays. For nearly 20 years chef Gilles Tournadre has been creating sophisticated dishes in this elegant dining room. Specialties include langoustines served with fresh tomato chutney, Pigeon *à la rouennaise*, and fillet of bass with asparagus. Remarkable wine list.

ST GERMAIN DE TALLEVENDE Auberge St Germain P €€

Pl de l'Eglise, 14500 ***Tel*** *02 31 68 24 13* ***Fax*** *02 31 68 89 57*

Next to the church in a village in the heart of the Calvados countryside, this old granite-built auberge has a cozy, intimate dining room with low oak-beamed ceilings and a fireplace. This is an ideal place for families, with good regional home cooking that caters for all tastes. Friendly service.

STE CECILE Le Manoir de l'Acherie P ♿ €€

Acherie, 50800 ***Tel*** *02 33 51 13 87* ***Fax*** *02 33 51 33 69*

In this old-fashioned manor house, with rooms in a converted chapel, the produce of Normandy features highly, such as cream, apples, calvados, and cider. Expect to find ham and lamb either braised in calvados, or served in a cider-flavored sauce. Even the apple tart is flambéed in this apple brandy. Good cheese board.

TROUVILLE SUR MER Régence P ♿ €€€

132 bd Fernand Moureaux, 14360 ***Tel*** *02 31 88 10 71* ***Fax*** *02 31 88 10 71*

Beautiful interior with mirrors and 19th-century wood paneling decorated by hungry Impressionist painters. The charming service and refined ambience lend to the feeling of elegance and good value. Not far from the shore, the seafood and shellfish are the house specialties. Well-presented dishes.

VEULES LES ROSES Les Galets P 🚸 ♿ €€€

3 rue Victor Hugo, 76980 ***Tel*** *02 35 97 61 33* ***Fax*** *02 35 57 06 23*

Traditional brick-built restaurant close to the pebbly beach, which is typical of the Côte d'Albâtre. Comfortable dining area inside, and lovely terrace outside. If you want to have a meal by the sea, this is just the place, but reserve ahead. Classic dishes prepared with care.

VILLERS BOCAGE Les Trois Rois P 🚸 €€€

2 pl Jeanne d'Arc, 14310 ***Tel*** *02 31 77 00 32* ***Fax*** *02 31 77 93 25*

In a vast square surrounded by a garden and vegetable patch, this restaurant flaunts all the characteristics of a traditional Norman restaurant. Spacious, elegant dining area serving generous portions of well-prepared local dishes, such as tripe and fresh fish dishes. Efficient service.

BRITTANY

AUDIERNE Le Goyen P 🚸 ♿ ⛱ 🍷 €€€

Pl Jean-Simon, 29770 ***Tel*** *02 98 70 08 88* ***Fax*** *02 98 70 18 77*

Classic seafood cuisine is served at this hotel-restaurant facing the sea. Deliciously fresh oysters and seafood platters are a good choice. The menu also includes roasted monkfish on a bed of spinach with a vermouth sauce, or panfried Coquille St-Jacques (scallops) accompanied by asparagus.

AURAY La Table des Marées 🚸 ⛱ 🍷 €€

16 rue du Jeu de Paume, 56400 ***Tel*** *02 97 56 63 60*

Chef Philippe Bogaty is a gastronomic missionary who conducts periodic "clinics" for customers in his kitchens and also offers recipes on his website. The seafood menu here is deliberately short, yet creative, and changes every few days. Within walking distance from the Golfe du Morbihan.

BELLE ILE EN MER La Désirade 🚸 🍷 ⛱ €€€

Le Petit Cosquet, 56360 ***Tel*** *02 97 31 70 70*

This family hotel and restaurant is in an attractive, traditional Brittany farmhouse only a few minutes from the beach. The chef specializes in fresh ingredients, with fish and seafood to the fore. Picnics can be ordered for a day's outing on the shore of this wonderful island. Closed Jan–Apr.

BREST Da Vinci 🚸 🍷 €

6 rue Louis Pasteur, 29200 ***Tel*** *02 98 46 90 90*

This Italian restaurant offers a pleasant alternative to the many local seafood restaurants. It is run in tandem with an Italian grocery store by the Halles food market. Ravioli, pasta, and risotto are prepared on the premises and there is a selection of Italian wine to accompany it. A popular local spot so reserve in advance.

BREST La Fleur de Sel 🍷 €€€€

15 bis rue de Lyon, 29200 ***Tel*** *02 98 44 38 65* ***Fax*** *02 98 44 38 53*

A modern bright city center restaurant, with simple, comfortable furnishings. The dishes are prepared with precision. Try the warm oysters with cider sabayon and the walnut *crême glacée*. Good value for money, especially the *fomule* at lunchtime. Service can sometimes be a little stuffy.

CARANTEC Restaurant Patrick Jeffroy P 🚸 ♿ ⛱ 🍷 €€€€€

20 rue Kélénn, 29660 ***Tel*** *02 98 67 00 47* ***Fax*** *02 98 67 08 25*

A magnificent view over Kélénn beach from the restaurant in this fabulous 1930s manor house hotel. Shellfish in abundance. Classic and modern cuisine combine to perfection. Roast fillet of sole accompanied by cider butter, vegetable *ragoût* with walnut oil, and fig *tatin* with mango sorbet. Extensive choice of Loire valley wines.

CARNAC La Calypso 🚸 P ♿ €€€

158 rte du Pô, 56340 ***Tel*** *02 97 52 06 14*

Overlooking the oyster beds of the Anse du Pô, this popular seafood restaurant is all the more charming for the colorful character that runs it. The house specialty is lobster or steak cooked over a wood fire in the hearth. A choice of fish of the day is offered as well as the usual seafood platters. Reservations are essential.

CONCARNEAU Le Petit Chaperon Rouge 🚸 ⛱ €

7 pl Duguesclin, 29900 ***Tel*** *02 98 60 53 32*

Following the "Little Red Riding Hood" theme with its wicker baskets and red tablecloths, this crêperie near the harbor has a delicious choice of savory and sweet fillings, such as La Blandette (goat's cheese, spinach, ham, and cream) and Mère Grande (banana and honey flambéed with rum).

DINAN La Mère Pourcel ⛱ 🍷 €€

3 pl des Merciers, 22100 ***Tel*** *02 96 39 03 80* ***Fax*** *02 96 39 49 91*

This restaurant in a stunning timbered Gothic building is a Dinan landmark, serving generous portions of seasonal gourmet cuisine. Locally reared lamb is on offer, along with more innovative dishes such as cod with truffles. Good selection of wines. The tables are on the cobbled street.

GUIMILIAU Ar Chupen 🧒 ♿ 🍽 €

43 rue de Calvaire, 29400 ***Tel*** *02 98 68 73 63*

After admiring the richly decorated church, step down the road to this restaurant in a renovated Breton farmhouse. Traditional lacy galettes, made with sarrazin flour, and crêpes are prepared to order. The choice of fillings seems endless. Good place for children, and vegetarians. Friendly staff.

HEDE L'Hostellerie du Vieux Moulin P 🧒 🍽 €€

Ancienne rte de St Malo, 35630 ***Tel*** *02 99 45 45 70* ***Fax*** *02 99 45 44 86*

Built in the 19th century as part of a complex to supply water power, the restaurant overlooks the Hédé castle, with the ruins of the old watermill in the grounds. Good-value lunchtime menus, including panfried scallops, lightly grilled langoustines, and succulent duck. Rooms available.

LE CONQUET Le Relais de Vieux Port 🧒 ♿ 🍽 €

1 quai Drellach, 29217 ***Tel*** *02 98 89 15 91*

You can almost dangle your feet in the water as you sit to choose the fillings for your crêpe. Seafood is the house specialty. Try a crêpe filled with fresh scallops or prawns accompanied by a green salad. Leave room for dessert, especially the Bonne Maman with caramelized apples and whipped cream.

LORIENT Le Neptune 🧒 €€

15 av de la Perrière, 56100 ***Tel*** *02 97 37 04 56* ***Fax*** *02 97 87 07 54*

The haul at the nearby fishing port of Keroman determines the dish of the day at this restaurant. Modern interior, with some tables in a pretty conservatory at the rear of the dining room. The menu includes flambéed lobster and fricassée of monkfish. Generous portions and friendly service.

MORLAIX Brasserie de l'Europe 🧒 🍽 €

1 rue d'Aiguillon, 29600 ***Tel*** *02 98 88 81 15*

An authentic brasserie in the town center next to the hotel of the same name. Everything from breakfast to sandwiches and cooked dishes is served right through the day from 8am until 9:30pm. There is a conservatory for winter and a pleasant terrace for summer.

NOYAL-SUR-VILAINE Auberge du Pont d'Acigné P 🧒 ♿ 🍽 🍷 €€€

Le Pont d'Acigné, 35530 ***Tel*** *02 99 62 52 55*

Not far from Rennes, overlooking the River Vilaine and an attractive water mill, is this delightful gourmet restaurant. The creative menu is based on seasonal market produce; dishes include Paimpol coco beans served with deliciously fresh lobster. There is also a fine selection of desserts.

PAIMPOL L'Islandais 🧒 🍽 €

19 quai Morand, 22500 ***Tel*** *02 96 20 93 80* ***Fax*** *02 96 20 72 68*

A popular crêperie overlooking the lively Paimpol harbor. The chef presents a good selection of traditional Breton galettes, always a favorite with children and a good option for vegetarians. Shellfish is abundant, with fresh oysters, mussels, lobsters, and langoustines. Expect to pay more for seafood.

PERROS-GUIREC Le Gulf Stream P 🧒 🍽 €€

26 rue des Sept-Iles 22700 ***Tel*** *02 96 23 21 86* ***Fax*** *02 96 49 06 61*

An excellent and reasonably priced hotel-restaurant with a warm, family feel. There are fine views of the coast from the dining room. As well as the expected fish and other seafood, the restaurant serves traditional French food according to the season. There is also a good wine list.

PLOUBALAY Le Gare ♿ 🍽 €€

4 rue des Ormelet, 22650 ***Tel*** *02 96 27 25 16*

Thomas Mureau, the former owner of the renowned Fleur de Sel at St Malo, concocts uncomplicated dishes with a touch of personality in this rustic restaurant. Of particular note are the brochettes of St. Jacques accompanied by a truffle-flavored vinaigrette, and the warm Roquefort and apple tart. The best tables look out over the pretty garden.

QUIBERON Le Relax P 🧒 ♿ 🍽 🍷 €€

27 bd Castéro, 56170 ***Tel*** *02 97 50 12 84*

With lovely sea views and a pretty garden, this restaurant is guaranteed to make you relax. A wide selection of superbly cooked seasonal fish, as well as mussels, langoustines, crab, and oysters. Tasty seafood sauerkraut. Good wine cellar and a sommelier who knows his stuff, but is not stuffy.

QUIMPER L'Ambroisie 🧒 €€€

49 rue Elie Fréron, 29000 ***Tel*** *02 98 95 00 02*

Located just at the end of one of the tiny streets in the center of Quimper, a short walk from the cathedral. Good simple cuisine using quality produce. Try the oysters with an artichoke bouillon, smoked salmon and egg rolled in a buckwheat pancake, and crispy almond cake with strawberries.

RENNES Léon le Cochon 🧒 ▤ ♿ €

1 rue du Maréchal Joffre, 35000 ***Tel*** *02 99 79 37 54*

A popular restaurant with a pig theme that has mellowed somewhat over time. Pork sausage from Morteau and pig's trotters are still on the menu, but you can also try terrine de *foie gras* marinated in Jurançon, beef, duck, prawns, and fish. It is possible to order take-out of most dishes, including the *foie gras*.

RENNES Le Tire-Bouchon €€

2 rue du Chapitre, 35000 ***Tel*** *02 99 79 43 43*

This relaxed friendly restaurant offers unpretentious home cooking. Mackerel pâté, braised beef and carrots, and rice pudding are just some of the dishes on offer. The wines are selected by the owner, who has a preference for "*vins naturels.*" Ideally located just around the corner from the tourist office.

ROSCOFF Le Surcouf €

14 rue Amiral Révellière, 29680 ***Tel*** *02 98 69 71 89* ***Fax*** *02 98 69 71 89*

Near the church, this brasserie-style restaurant serves regional cuisine. The fixed-price menus have a wide choice of local coastal produce. Start with a plate of mussels, sea snails, whelks, and a half-dozen oysters. For the main course, choose a lobster from the tank, or the delicious seafood casserole.

ROSCOFF Le Temps de Vivre P ♿ €€€€

17-19 pl Lacaze-Douthiers, 29680 ***Tel*** *02 98 61 27 28* ***Fax*** *02 98 61 19 46*

The acclaimed chef Jean-Yves Crenn does wonderful things with vegetables in this restaurant facing the sea. Seafood is the specialty: panfried langoustines with an artichoke *galette* and *agneau de lait* du Monts d'Arrée. Good selection of wines. Friendly staff.

ST-BRIEUC Amadeus €€

22 rue de Gouët, 22000 ***Tel*** *02 96 33 92 44* ***Fax*** *02 96 33 92 44*

In one of this historic town's oldest buildings, this elegant gourmet restaurant specializes in fish – truffle-topped sea bass, tuna *ratatouille*, and fillet of sole are all outstanding. The wide range of tempting desserts includes Amaretto chocolate cake and Breton butter cookies with fruit.

ST-BRIEUC L'Air du Temps €€

4 rue du Gouët, 22000 ***Tel*** *02 96 68 58 40*

A welcome addition to the local culinary scene, this pleasant bistro-style restaurant is fast establishing a good reputation. The interior combines 200-year-old stone walls with modern decor. Dishes are served in caste-iron Staub ware. Coquille St. Jacques (scallops) are cooked at your table.

ST-MALO La Corderie P €€

9 chemin de la Corderie, 35400 ***Tel*** *02 99 81 62 38*

A fish restaurant in an attractive old house. The menu changes according to whatever the fishing boats bring in. Coquilles St Jacques are served with a seaweed flavored cream sauce. Meat dishes such as duck breast in honey are also on offer. A quiet spot with fine views over the moorings and the Tour Solidor.

ST-MALO Le Chalut €€€€

8 rue de la Corne de Cerf, 35400 ***Tel*** *02 99 56 71 58* ***Fax*** *02 99 56 71 58*

One of St Malo's best restaurants, the chef excels in fish dishes and well-chosen produce simply prepared. A platter of fish served with an orange- and saffron-flavored sauce, and St-Pierre with coriander are examples of the delicious dishes on offer. Good selection of cheese, too.

VANNES Table des Gourmets €€€

6 rue Alexandre-le-Pontois, 56000 ***Tel*** *02 97 47 52 44*

Tasty meals at reasonable prices served in this restaurant opposite the ramparts. The chef uses regional ingredients with originality. Try the sautéed lobster with girolle mushrooms, or the *croustillant* of pigeon with perfumed rice. The wine list includes organic producers.

VITRE La Taverne de l'Ecu €€€

12 rue Baudairie, 35500 ***Tel*** *02 99 75 11 09* ***Fax*** *02 99 75 82 97*

This half-timbered Renaissance house provides an historic ambience for a meal in one of two dining rooms. Menu changes seasonally. Try the venison served with a chestnut flan, fish with sorrel sauce accompanied by courgette (zucchini) crumble, or roast leg of rabbit. Homemade bread accompanies your meal.

THE LOIRE VALLEY

AMBOISE Le Choiseul P €€€€

36 quai C.Guinot, 37400 ***Tel*** *02 47 30 45 45* ***Fax*** *02 47 30 46 10*

Elegant 18th-century hotel with a pretty garden and views of the Loire from the airy dining room. The sophisticated menu changes seasonally; in spring a meal might include rabbit and apricot brioche, in summer roast pike-perch and leek ravioli. Good Touraine wines and many other regional wines.

ANGERS Ma Campagne ♿ €

14 promenade de la Reculée, 49000 ***Tel*** *02 41 48 38 06*

A traditional, country-style auberge just a few minutes' walk along the river from the center of town. The terrace has great views overlooking the River Maine. The cheaper menus are particularly good value for money. For dessert, the pear coated in chocolate is recommended.

ANGERS Le Lucullus 🧒 €€

5 rue Hoche, 49000 ***Tel*** *02 41 87 00 44* ***Fax*** *02 41 87 00 44*

This pretty restaurant carved into the tuffeau rock has two lovely vaulted dining rooms. Classic dishes and regional specialties served with an added touch from the chef. Try the tasty sautéed scallops with saffron-flavored sauce, the crayfish brochettes, and the classic fillet of beef with morille mushrooms.

BEAUGENCY Le P'tit Bateau 🧒 ♿ ⛱ €€€

54 rue du Pont, 45190 ***Tel*** *02 38 44 56 38* ***Fax*** *02 38 46 44 37*

Near the château, the P'tit Bateau is the most appealing restaurant in town. Popular with locals, it offers traditional cuisine in a rustic dining room with exposed beams and open fireplace. Fresh fish, game in season, and wild mushrooms feature on the menu. There is a courtyard terrace for sunny days.

BLOIS Hôtel Restaurant Coté Loire 🧒 ⛱ €

2 pl de la Grève, 41000 ***Tel*** *02 54 78 07 86*

A good old fashioned 16th-century restaurant and hotel overlooking the River Loire. The simple but reasonably-priced menu changes regularly and there is sometimes a *menu unique* at lunch time. The Coté Loire is a good place to break while visiting the château and neighboring sites on the Loire.

BLOIS L'Orangerie du Château P 🧒 ♿ ⛱ 🍷 €€€€

1 av Jean Laigret, 41000 ***Tel*** *02 54 78 05 36* ***Fax*** *02 54 78 22 78*

Housed in the 15th-century château's former winter garden, the fine setting is matched by the food and wine here. The menu features regional favorites with a traditional approach, such as roast saddle of lamb served in a herb crust or lobster ravioli. A dependable wine list with good Touraine producers.

BOUCHEMAINE La Terrasse 🧒 €€

4 pl Rouzebouc, 49080 ***Tel*** *02 41 77 11 96* ***Fax*** *02 41 77 25 71*

Located in a hamlet on the confluence of the rivers Loire and Maine, this restaurant has a panoramic view. Menu features freshly caught eel, pike-perch, salmon, and other freshwater fish. Classic dishes are excellently prepared, such as *sandre au beurre blanc* (pike-perch in butter). Ironically, there is no terrace.

BOURGES La Courcillière 🧒 ⛱ €€

Rue de Babylone, 18000 ***Tel*** *02 48 24 41 91*

By the marshes overlooking the river Yèvre, it's worth the 20-minute walk from the city center for freshwater fish and local cooking – classic dishes such as pike-perch fillet, eel in red wine, or delicious salmon. Traditional dining area with modern bright decor and delightful terrace. Attentive service.

BOURGES Le Piet à Terre P 🧒 ▤ ♿ ⛱ 🍷 €€€€

44 bd Latiholle, 18000 ***Tel*** *02 48 67 95 60*

Former metal worker and now top chef, Thierry Finet has successfully transferred his restaurant from Chateaumeillant to this beautifully refurbished 18th-century *maison bourgoise* with five bedrooms. Finet is an expert in the use of syrups and he still fetches his vegetables from his old garden. Classic French menu.

BOURGUEIL Le Moulin Bleu 🧒 ⛱ 🍷 €€

7 rue du Moulin-Bleu, 37140 ***Tel*** *02 47 97 73 13* ***Fax*** *02 47 97 79 66*

The house at the foot of this pretty blue mill has two vaulted dining rooms serving traditional dishes in a friendly atmosphere. The cuisine remains faithful to the region, with Touraine-reared veal served with a Vouvray butter sauce. Good Bourgeuil producers on the wine list. In the off-season only open Friday and Saturday evenings.

BRACIEUX Le Rendez-vous des Gourmets P 🧒 ♿ ⛱ €€

20 rue Roger Brun, 41250 ***Tel*** *02 54 46 03 87*

This auberge was taken over and completely renovated by Didier Doreau, the former second chef from the nearby luxury Relais. He has sucessfully created his own place offering traditional and regional cuisine at an affordable price. The restaurant has become very popular so it is best to reserve ahead.

CHARTRES Le Grand Monarque – Le Georges 🧒 ▤ ♿ ⛱ 🍷 €€€€

22 pl des Epars, 28000 ***Tel*** *02 37 18 15 15* ***Fax*** *02 37 36 34 18*

Within this magnificent 17th-century staging post are both a gourmet "le Georges" restaurant, and a brasserie serving traditional food. The cuisine is ambitious and flavorful, with dishes such as red mullet and Loire eel in vinaigrette, and Erquy scallops *à la plancha*. Excellent desserts. First-rate wine cellar.

CHENONCEAUX Hôtel Restaurant la Roseraie P 🧒 ▤ ♿ ⛱ €€

7 rue du Docteur Bretonneau, 37150 ***Tel*** *02 47 23 90 09*

A pleasant 18th-century *hotel de charme* close to the château. The traditional restaurant serves classic French cuisine. The €25 menu offers particularly good value for money and includes dishes such as fish terrine with garden vegetables, rissolé of lamb with mushrooms, and a delicious crème caramel.

CHINON Les Années 30 🧒 ♿ ⛱ €€

78 rue Haute St-Maurice, 37500 ***Tel*** *02 47 93 37 18* ***Fax*** *02 47 93 33 72*

This elegant little eatery on the way up to the château has a chef who has brought back the spark to this menu. Stéphane Charles presents dishes such as pigeon and langoustine served with a truffle-flavored vinaigrette and crème brûlée with exotic fruit. Good local wines.

CLISSON La Bonne Auberge €€€€

1 rue Olivier de Clisson, 44190 ***Tel*** *02 40 54 01 90* ***Fax*** *02 40 54 08 48*

A comfortable auberge in the city center with three attractive dining rooms, one set in a conservatory with garden views. The specialties here include lobster gratin, *paupiettes* of sea bass, scallops with truffles, and pigeon breast in red Chinon sauce. The desserts are delicate, and the selection of Muscadets is good.

CONTRES La Botte d'Asperges €€

52 rue Pierre-Henri Mauger, 41700 ***Tel*** *02 54 79 50 49* ***Fax*** *02 54 79 08 74*

Locally grown asparagus features prominently on the menu, in season. Behind the rustic atmosphere is an inspirational chef who prepares such delights as celery mousse with red tuna and for dessert banana *feuillantine*. Small, well-chosen wine list. You can also take food out.

DOUE-LA-FONTAINE Auberge de la Bienvenue €€€

104 rte de Cholet, 49700 ***Tel*** *02 41 59 22 44* ***Fax*** *02 41 59 93 49*

A pretty inn situated in this town of roses. The menu offers elaborate, savory preparations using welcome favorites, such as calf's liver in port and pepper sauce, terrine of *foie gras* flavored with local Coteaux du Layon wine, or saddle of Aveyron lamb. Other dishes include local products such as pike-perch, crayfish, and wild mushrooms.

FONTEVRAUD-L'ABBAYE La Licorne €€€€

Allée Sainte-Catherine, 49590 ***Tel*** *02 41 51 72 49* ***Fax*** *02 41 51 70 40*

Next to the splendid abbey, this popular restaurant has a pretty courtyard terrace and elegant dining room. The menu includes creations such as langoustine ravioli in morel sauce and, for dessert, strawberries flavored with roses. Good Saumur wines. Reserve ahead.

GENNES Auberge du Moulin de Sarré €

Rte de Louerre, 49350 ***Tel*** *02 41 51 81 32*

After taking a tour of the 16th-century watermill (the only working one in the region), try either the menu of *fouées* (warm bread puffs, made from flour ground at the mill) with fillings such as goat's cheese, or *rillettes* (duck pâté), or the fresh trout menu (fished on the spot). Reservations are required.

GIEN Restaurant la Poularde €€€€

13 quai de Nice, 45500 ***Tel*** *02 38 67 36 05* ***Fax*** *02 38 38 18 78*

A classic restaurant on the banks of the Loire, serving traditional cuisine in an elegant dining room, with Gien tableware. The menu includes succulent breast of Sologne pigeon in Chinon wine with mushrooms, *carpaccio* of sea bass flavored with lime and vanilla, and mini pancakes stuffed with passion fruit. Game appears on the menu in season.

LA FERTE IMBAULT Auberge à la Tête de Lard €€

13 pl des Tilleuls, 41300 ***Tel*** *02 54 96 22 32*

An authentic, completely refurbished country hotel in the heart of the Sologne houses a delightful restaurant, which offers a traditional menu with choices such as wild boar and other seasonal country dishes. This is a good place to stop when visiting the Loire Châteaux. Closed Sun dinner; Tue lunch; Mon.

LAMOTTE BEUVRON Hôtel Tatin €€€

5 av de Vierzon, 41600 ***Tel*** *02 54 88 00 03* ***Fax*** *02 54 88 96 73*

This elegant hotel-restaurant serves traditional fare made with fresh local produce. The menu includes *foie gras*, salad of homemade pâté and warm goat's cheese, pike-perch, pigeon, steak, and the famous *tarte Tatin*. There is a good selection of quality Sancerre and Cheverny wines.

LANGEAIS Au Coin des Halles €

9 rue Gambetta, 37120 ***Tel*** *02 47 96 37 25*

This restaurant is the new venture of Pascal Bouvier, former chef of the illustrious Choiseul at Amboise. It successfully combines a Zen interior with excellent cuisine and affordable prices. The menu is varied – mullet and sandre (pike-perch) from the Loire, shoulder of lamb, duck, Brittany sardines, and *foie gras*. Next to the Château de Langeais.

LE MANS Le Bistrot du Mans €

12 rue Hippolyte Lecornué, 72000 ***Tel*** *02 43 87 51 00*

Cheerful, busy, traditional brasserie, beautifully decorated in early 1900s style. The wide ranging menu features such classic dishes as salmon stew with snails and mushrooms, blood sausage with caramelized shallots, or steak with blue cheese sauce. Breakfast is served until noon. Great value.

LE MANS Le Nez Rouge €€

107 grande rue, 72000 ***Tel*** *02 43 24 27 26*

A charming timbered restaurant in the medieval part of Le Mans. The young chef has trained in some of the best restaurants in France. His dishes are based on the freshest produce, such as lobster and veal sweetbreads. The dining room is cozy and intimate, and there is a terrrace across the road. Reserve ahead.

LEMERE L'Auberge de Jable €€

le Clos de Jable, 37120 ***Tel*** *02 47 95 47 95*

A delightful country restaurant in a huge 15th-century farm, set in 20 hectares of fields and vineyards. The auberge is run by a Franco-American couple who have plans for *chambres d'hôtes*. The chic decor is matched by the elegant food. Sweetbreads and panfried *foie gras* are served outside in fine weather and by an open fire in winter.

LES SABLES D'OLONNE L'Affiche €€

21 Quai Giné, 85100 ***Tel*** *02 51 95 34 74*

Diners crowd in to this Intimate little fish restaurant: the food is excellent, the menu is varied, and the wine is good. Make sure you get the right restaurant on the busy Quai – there are several but this one serves the best seafood platters, which is why it is so popular with the locals. Reservations are essential.

MALICORNE-SUR-SARTHE La Petite Auberge €€

5 pl du Guesclin, 72270 ***Tel*** *02 43 94 80 52* ***Fax*** *02 43 94 31 37*

In summer dine on the riverside terrace and watch the boats go by; in winter take refuge around the magnificent medieval fireplace. Enjoy classic cuisine with an innovative twist, such as delicious gratin of scallops with smoked salmon or perfectly cooked steak with a red Bourgeuil wine sauce.

MONTBAZON La Chancelière Jeu de Cartes €€€

1 pl des Marronniers, 37250 ***Tel*** *02 47 26 00 67* ***Fax*** *02 47 73 14 82*

Modern, sophisticated cuisine prepared with precision. This restaurant proposes savory but uncomplicated dishes such as Racan pigeon served with cabbage confit or king prawn rissoles. Well-selected wine list with good Vouvray and Bourgeuil producers.

MONTOIRE-SUR-LE-LOIR Le Cheval Rouge P €€€€

Pl Foch, 41800 ***Tel*** *02 54 85 07 05* ***Fax*** *02 54 85 17 42*

After visiting the chapel and prior's lodging where Ronsard (16th-century French poet) spent his last years, stop off and dine on classic cuisine in this ancient staging post. Enjoy well-prepared regional dishes in the attractive dining room or outside on the shady terrace with its 100-year-old plane tree.

MONTSOREAU Diane de Méridor €€€

12 quai Philippe de Commines, 49730 ***Tel*** *02 41 51 71 76* ***Fax*** *02 41 51 17 17*

While dining you have a view of the château that was the movie setting for the interpretation of la Dame de Montsoreau by Alexandre Dumas. Carved out of tuffeau rock, in this town perched above the Loire, this restaurant is rustic with exposed beams and an open fireplace. It specializes in freshwater fish dishes cooked to perfection.

NANTES La Cigale €€

4 pl Graslin, 44000 ***Tel*** *02 51 84 94 94* ***Fax*** *02 51 84 94 95*

This ornate Belle Epoque brasserie dates from 1895 when it was frequented by celebrated writers and Nantes elite. The quality of the cuisine matches the exceptional interior. Oysters, *carpaccio* of salmon, and beef *à la plancha* (cooked on a hot plate). Open all day. Extensive wine list.

NANTES Le Pressoir €€€

11 quai de Turenne, 44000 ***Tel*** *02 40 35 31 10*

More than a simple bistro, this restaurant is a newcomer on the quays. The young chef presents interesting dishes such as *foie gras* and oxtail terrine, *pot au feu* of goose, and steak with morille mushrooms. The wine list is extensive, many by the glass. Reserve ahead.

NANTES Les Temps Changent €€€

1 pl Aristide-Briand, 44000 ***Tel*** *02 51 72 18 01*

Excellent chef with a vision of modern cuisine. This welcoming venue provides quality French dishes that combine classic produce and inventive cooking. Menu includes *foie gras à la plancha* with baby vegetables and red mullet served with baby fennel and a tapenade. Interesting wines.

NANTES L'Océanide €€€

2 rue Paul Bellamy, 44000 ***Tel*** *02 40 20 32 28*

A first-class seafood restaurant and one of the best in Nantes. It was designed in World War II – when it was impossible to travel – to resemble the interior of an ocean liner. Being next to the Talensac market with its 14 fishmongers, 10 butchers, and 16 *charcutiers* means the fresh ingredients change daily.

ONZAIN Domaine des Hauts de Loire P €€€€€

Rte de Herbault, 41150 ***Tel*** *02 54 20 72 57* ***Fax*** *02 54 20 77 32*

Gastronomic cuisine is served in this former hunting lodge, set within its own park. Superb dishes are presented by chef Rémy Giraud, such as eggs with caviar d'Aquitaine, braised beef in Montlouis wine, and lobster served with curried Noirmoutier potatoes. Classic wine list.

ORLEANS La Chancellerie €€€

27 pl du Martroi, 45000 ***Tel*** *02 38 53 57 54*

This lively brasserie-restaurant is located on the town's main square. Built by order of the Duke of Orléans in 1754, it was used to keep the carriages, and later became the omnibus station. The interior has high ceilings, a marble bar, leather banquettes, and brass trimmings. Staple fare enlivened by good wines. Snacks and salads are also available.

ORLEANS La Dariole €

25 rue Etienne Dolet, 45000 ***Tel*** *02 38 77 26 67*

A surprising little restaurant and tearoom in a 15th-century, half-timbered building in the narrow streets of the city center. Open during the day and on Friday evenings, the menu includes meat and seafood and changes every two weeks, with dishes like Coquilles St. Jacques with rosemary on a skewer. Excellent value.

ORLEANS La Terrasse du Parc

P 🧒 ♿ ⛱ 🍷 €€

Av du Parc Floral, 45100 ***Tel*** *02 38 25 92 24*

When the prestigious Les Antiquaires in the city center was closed for redevelopment work, owner Philippe Bardau opened this elegant establishment in the park. A super-modern conservatory with huge bay windows overlooks the park and a terrace. Refined gourmet menu. Ideally reserve 48 hours ahead.

ROCHECORBON Les Hautes Roches

P ♿ ⛱ 🍸 🍷 €€€€

86 quai Loire, 37210 ***Tel*** *02 47 52 88 88* ***Fax*** *02 47 52 81 30*

The dining room in this château is decorated in contemporary tones and serves meticulously prepared classic cuisine. The chef prepares irresitible dishes, such as *carpaccio* of scallops and Charolais beef, lamb served with aubergine (eggplant) caviar, an all-lobster menu, and Grand Marnier soufflé. The cellar has wonderful wines from the best local producers.

SACHE Auberge du XII siècle

🧒 ♿ ⛱ 🍷 €€€€

1 rue du Château, 37190 ***Tel*** *02 47 26 88 77* ***Fax*** *02 47 26 88 21*

In an historic building, a stone's throw from the Balzac museum, the dining room has a rustic atmosphere with exposed beams. There is a good choice of fixed-price menus with classic dishes, such as scrambled eggs with crayfish and raspberry *feuillantine*.

SANCERRE Auberge la Pomme d'Or

🧒 ♿ €€

Pl de la Mairie, 18300 ***Tel*** *02 48 54 13 30* ***Fax*** *02 48 54 19 22*

This small restaurant in a former coaching inn serves classic dishes. The savory cuisine uses seasonal produce from the region. Enjoy the simplicity of the Chavignol goat's cheese, breast of guinea fowl with asparagus, or pike-perch, complemented by a glass of Sancerre.

SAUMUR Auberge St Pierre

🧒 ⛱ €€€

6 pl St Pierre, 49400 ***Tel*** *02 41 51 26 25* ***Fax*** *02 41 59 89 28*

On a square near the château in a former 15th-century monastery, this convivial restaurant serves regional specialties prepared with care. Dishes include pike-perch fillet and chicken cooked in Loire wine. Accompany a regional cheese with a glass of fruity red wine, such as St Nicolas de Bourgeuil.

SOUVIGNY-EN-SOLOGNE Auberge de la Grange aux Oies

🧒 ♿ ⛱ €€

2 rue Gâtinais, 41600 ***Tel*** *02 54 88 40 08* ***Fax*** *02 54 88 40 08*

Located in the center of this charming village, opposite the 12th-century church, in a picturesque timbered building. The restaurant serves classic cuisine with an uplifiting modern touch, using local Sologne produce. Tasty, succulent dishes are prepared, such as free-range chicken with a cognac-flavored stuffing.

ST-OUEN LES VIGNES L'Aubinière

🧒 ☰ ♿ ⛱ 🍸 €€€

29 rue Jules Gautier, 37530 ***Tel*** *02 47 30 15 29* ***Fax*** *02 47 30 02 44*

North of Amboise, this small rustic restaurant opens onto a pretty garden that leads down to the river. Enjoy the creations of chef Jacques Arrayet, who serves outstanding dishes including snail ravioli, veal trotters stuffed with *cèpes*, and mango crumble with kiwi sorbet.

THOUARCE Le Relais de Bonnezeaux

P 🧒 ☰ €€€

Rte Angers, 49380 ***Tel*** *02 41 54 08 33* ***Fax*** *02 41 54 00 63*

This large, pleasant dining room is located in a converted train station overlooking the vineyards – this is sweet wine country. Imaginative cuisine with regional produce in dishes such as pigeon with an Anjou sauce and the specialty eel braised in Bonnezeaux.

TOURS L'Atelier Gourmand

♿ ⛱ 🍷 €€

37 rue Etienne Marcel, 37000 ***Tel*** *02 47 38 59 87* ***Fax*** *02 47 50 14 23*

A charming small restaurant in a 15th-century building in the old part of Tours. Fabrice Bironneau presents a competitively priced, interesting menu. Dishes include leek *clafoutis* and a *parmentier* of pork. Warm, homely ambience. Good wine selection.

TOURS L'Odéon

🧒 🍷 €€

10 pl de la Gare, 37000 ***Tel*** *02 47 20 12 65*

Just a short walk from Tours' station, this Art Deco-style restaurant provides quality French regional dishes such as smoked salmon, lobster, or pigeon, and delicious dark chocolate profiteroles for dessert. The wine list is particularly extensive.

TOURS L'Arche de Meslay

P 🧒 ♿ ⛱ 🍷 €€€

14 rue Ailes in Parçay Meslay, 37210 ***Tel*** *02 47 29 00 07* ***Fax*** *02 47 29 04 04*

Worth the 6-mile (9-km) detour from the city center, this refined, contemporary restaurant has a sunny terrace and a kitchen in full view. Watch the chef prepare a delicious lobster with chipped vegetables, *bouillabaisse tourangelle* (regional fish stew), or tuna tataki with a sesame seed crust.

TOURS La Rive Gauche

P 🧒 ☰ ⛱ 🍷 €€€

23 rue du Commerce, 37000 ***Tel*** *02 47 05 71 21*

This refurbished and renamed restaurant was pronounced revelation of the year by Gault Millau for 2009. In less than 12 months it has gained national recognition. A varied menu features snails, crayfish, and creamed parsnips. Prices remain reasonable with a lunchtime discovery menu for €25.

TOURS La Roche Le Roy

P 🧒 ☰ 🍸 🪑 🍷 €€€€

55 rte de St-Avertin, 37000 ***Tel*** *02 47 27 22 00* ***Fax*** *02 47 28 08 39*

On the edge of the city center, in an elegant 18th-century manor, is this Michelin-starred restaurant serving classic quality French cuisine. Specialties include pike-perch with a gingerbread crust and roast Racan pigeon breast with *foie gras*. Good selection of wines from the Loire and Bordeaux.

VALAIRE L'Herbe Rouge

P 🧒 🪑 €

le Bourg, 41120 ***Tel*** *02 54 44 98 14*

Hidden away in tiny Valaire, a few kilometers from Chaumont-sur-Loire, is this excellent country bistro. The decor is somewhat stuck in the 1950s with plastic stools and other kitsch touches, but there is a pleasant terrace for fine days. Simple traditional cooking includes chicken liver pâté, *paupiette de veau* (stuffed veal), and *clafouti*. Good local wines.

VENDOME La Vallée

P 🧒 ♿ 🪑 🍷 €€

34 rue Barré-de-St-Venant, 41100 ***Tel*** *02 54 77 29 93*

This restaurant serves well-prepared traditional dishes by chef Marc Georget, who is respectful of the quality of the produce. Offerings include Loire valley asparagus in season, fish from Brittany, and well-sourced veal. Classic, rustic dining room. Good regional wines, too.

VIGNOUX SUR BARANGEON Le Prieuré

P 🧒 ♿ 🪑 €€€

2 rte de St Laurent, 18500 ***Tel*** *02 48 51 58 80* ***Fax*** *02 48 54 56 01*

Near to Vierzon, this lovely hotel-restaurant was built in 1862 to serve as the village presbytery. High-quality gourmet cuisine is served in the elegant dining room or on the covered terrace by the pool. Expect to find dishes such as roast pike-perch with Berry lentils and *foie gras*.

VOUVRAY La Cave Martin

🧒 🪑 🍷 €

66 vallée Coquette, 37210 ***Tel*** *02 47 52 62 18*

In this wine village, this restaurant carved into the tuffeau rock has a rustic menu with *andouillettes* (tripe sausages), duck breast and confit, and a decent choice of salads. Start with a glass of local fizzy wine, and finish with an unctuous sweet Vouvray with dessert. Reserve ahead.

BURGUNDY & FRANCHE-COMTE

ARBOIS Jean-Paul Jeanet

P ☰ 🪑 🍸 🍷 €€€€

9 rue de l'Hôtel de Ville, 39600 ***Tel*** *03 84 66 05 67*

In the center of picturesque Arbois, this ancient convent houses an impressive hotel and restaurant. The dining room is elegant and rustic with a pretty terrace. Staff are attentive and enthusiastic. The cuisine of Jean-Paul Jeanet constantly evolves, and his dishes are created with passion and harmony. Exciting desserts, too.

ARNAY LE DUC Chez Camille

P 🧒 ♿ €€€€

1 pl Edouard Herriot, 21230 ***Tel*** *03 80 90 01 38*

This former vacation residence of a Marechal de France has a modern dining room serving traditional Burgundy fare, where game takes pride of place. Hearty, rustic dishes that eschew contemporary trends. Specialties include a marvelous pheasant pâté, venison with a Grand Veneur sauce, and a wild boar stew with chestnuts.

AUXERRE Le Jardin Gourmand

P 🧒 ♿ 🪑 €€€€

56 bd Vauban, 89000 ***Tel*** *03 86 51 53 52* ***Fax*** *03 86 52 33 82*

Adventurous and inventive dishes are on offer at this attractive dining room in a former wine-grower's house. Try the lemon confit and green olive homemade Guéméné *andouille* or the terrine of veal. The menu changes with the season, and with the chef's vegetable garden. Wonderful cheeses. Pleasant patio. Reserve ahead.

AVALLON Relais des Gourmets

P 🧒 ♿ 🪑 €€

45–47 rue de Paris, 89200 ***Tel*** *03 86 34 18 90*

A traditional auberge with two dining rooms in the fine fortified town of Avallon. The glass-domed, light and airy Salle des Oliviers does indeed have olive trees planted in it. The set menus offer a good selection of both fish and meat dishes, and a vegetarian choice. The bistro, La Salle Bourguignonne, has simple good-value, fixed-priced menus.

BEAUNE La Ciboulette

🧒 ☰ ♿ 🍷 €

69 rue Lorraine, 21200 ***Tel*** *03 80 24 70 72* ***Fax*** *03 80 22 79 71*

A delightful little bistro frequented by locals; always a good sign. The basic decor is in contrast with the high standard of cooking. Hearty dishes, such as steak with pungent Epoisses cheese. The best value in town. Local wine merchants come here to choose from the excellent wine list.

BEAUNE L'Ecusson

🧒 ☰ ♿ 🪑 🍷 €€€

Pl Malmedy, 21200 ***Tel*** *03 80 24 03 82*

Wooden floors and oak beams give a rustic look to this restaurant. The cuisine is daring and stamped with the chef's personality. Trademark dishes include beef ravioli served with horseradish sauce, and poached Bresse chicken flavored with nutmeg and accompanied by polenta. There are several good Burgundies on the wine list.

BEAUNE Le Bistro de L'Hôtel ⛱ 🍸 🍷 €€€€

3 rue Samuel Legay, 21200 ***Tel** 03 80 25 94 10*

Expect a friendly welcome at this restaurant and the adjacent L'Hôtel de Beaune, both within the city walls. High quality ingredients are sourced from local suppliers. The menu varies depending on the season, but most dishes are French with Italian influences. Excellent wine list and lovely terrace. Cooking courses and *domaine* visits are available.

BEAUNE Hostellerie de Levernois P 🚸 ☰ ♿ ⛱ 🍸 🍷 €€€€€

Rte de Cobertault, Levernois, 21200 ***Tel** 03 80 24 73 58* ***Fax** 03 80 22 78 00*

This beautiful old mansion with formal gardens occupies an idyllic country setting. The classic restaurant serves up "serious" cuisine, such as snail and frogs' leg risotto, lightly smoked pigeon, and shoulder of lamb *de sept heures*, or salmon smoked over vine cuttings. Vast wine list. Faultless service.

BELFORT Le Pot au Feu ☰ ⛱ €€

27 bis grand' rue, 90000 ***Tel** 03 84 28 57 84* ***Fax** 03 84 58 17 65*

This bustling restaurant in a 17th-century vaulted cellar serves homely dishes alongside modern, innovative cuisine. Opt for the *pot au feu*, which is a braised beef and vegetable stew, or panfried veal kidneys with morille mushrooms, or salmon sushi with wasabi and horseradish sauce.

BONLIEU La Poutre P 🚸 ♿ ⛱ €€€

25 Grande Rue, 39130 ***Tel** 03 84 25 57 77*

A charming farmhouse dating from 1740 houses this rustic dining room with stone walls and oak beams. Relax in the friendly atmosphere and delight in the good home cooking based on regional specialties. Well presented dishes include panfried *foie gras* with forest fruits. Ideally situated for visits to the spectacular Cascades du Hérisson.

CHABLIS La Cuisine au Vin 🚸 ♿ €€

16 rue Auxerroise, 89800 ***Tel** 03 86 18 98 52*

Proprietor Daniel Etienne Defaix, largely responsible for the development of Chablis, has also launched this attractive restaurant. Traditional Burgundy recipes are given a contemporary makeover. An interesting range of well-prepared dishes are on the menu and include ham on the bone and parsley-imbibed snails.

CHAGNY Lameloise P ☰ ♿ 🍸 🍷 €€€€€

36 pl d'Armes, 71150 ***Tel** 03 85 87 65 65* ***Fax** 03 85 87 03 57*

Family owned for more than a century, Lameloise is known for its reassuringly classic French dishes. Well-mastered Burgundian cooking: pigeon with fresh *foie gras* pasta, *fricasée* of Bresse chicken served with morille mushrooms, and vanilla macaroon with pistachio cream. Pure, powerful flavors done to perfection.

CHAINTRE La Table de Chaintré 🚸 ☰ ♿ 🍷 €€€€

Le Bourg, 71570 ***Tel** 03 85 32 90 95* ***Fax** 03 83 32 91 04*

Not far from Mâcon, this well-established restaurant comes highly recommended, with a menu that changes weekly. Try the *menu découverte* with four small main dishes, cheese, and dessert, or order *à la carte* favorites or more elaborate dishes like sea bass with salsify and truffles. Great desserts.

CHALON-SUR-SAONE L'Air du Temps ⛱ €€

7 rue de Strasbourg, 71100 ***Tel** 03 85 93 39 01* ***Fax** 03 85 93 39 01*

Plainly furnished restaurant, with flavors and colors that explode on the palate. The regional menu changes every 15 days and uses seasonal ingredients. The chef simplifies classic dishes, and delicacies include *escargots* and roasted veal fillet. Friendly service.

CHAROLLES Restaurant Fédéric Doucet P 🚸 ♿ ⛱ €€€€

2 av de la Libération, 71120 ***Tel** 03 85 24 11 32*

Where better to enjoy a Charolais steak than at Charolles? This beautiful, chic, provincial restaurant, near the village church, serves modern cuisine with a nod to the traditional. The chef's talent shines in dishes such as the halibut and asparagus, and the sea bream and nettles. Desserts also reveal careful preparation. Good Maçon wines.

CHASSAGNE-MONTRACHET Le Chassagne ☰ 🍷 €€€€€

4 impasse Chenevottes, 21180 ***Tel** 03 80 21 94 94* ***Fax** 03 80 21 97 77*

Definitely the right place to enjoy a glass of Chassagne at the Chassagne restaurant. Try the deliciously fresh lobster, squid risotto, or sole served with morille mushrooms, accompanied by the local Chardonnay, or the lamb stuffed with courgettes (zucchini) with a good red Pinot. The quality outweighs the price.

CHATEAUNEUF La Fontaine P €€

Chateauneuf, 71740 ***Tel** 03 85 26 26 87* ***Fax** 03 85 26 26 87*

Situated at the edge of the village in a former workshop for cloth weaving, the interior of this restaurant is decorated in a retro style with an extravagant pink and pistachio mosaic and a lovely fountain. The menu offers innovative interpretations of traditional dishes. Good-value fixed-price menus.

DIJON D'Zenvies ☰ ♿ ⛱ €€

12 rue Odebert, 21000 ***Tel** 03 80 50 09 26*

A contemporary bistro situated near Les Halles serving simple gourmet cuisine. The chef is part of the new generation who remain faithful to quality produce and present unfussy dishes. Specialties include *foie gras* served with a chutney, steak with a "real" Béarnaise, cod with crushed potatoes, and a rich chocolate tart. Good choice of wines by the glass.

DIJON Le Bistrot des Halles P ▤ ♿ ⛱ €€

10 rue Bannelier, 21000 ***Tel*** *03 80 49 94 15*

At lunchtime this 1900s-style bistro is roaring. Located next to the market, it attracts food merchants and local business people with its meat pie, *jambon persillé*, and *bœuf bourgignon*. Well-known Dijon chef Jean-Pierre Billoux, who has an upmarket restaurant in Dijon center, oversees this bistro.

DIJON Le Chabrot ▤ ⛱ 🍷 €€

36 rue Monge, 21000 ***Tel*** *03 80 30 69 61* ***Fax*** *03 80 50 02 35*

The cozy interior, chatty owner, and regional specialties make this restaurant popular. Le Chabrot presents traditional dishes with an innovative twist, such as the *pain d'épices* (gingerbread) ice cream. There is a good selection of Burgundy wines, some sold by the glass.

DIJON Hostellerie du Chapeau Rouge ▤ T 🍷 €€€€

5 rue Michelet, 21000 ***Tel*** *03 80 50 88 88*

Simply the best place to eat in town. The methodical and determined chef invites diners to travel the world with compositions like bass cooked with the juice of soya. Many of the dishes reflect an Asiatic note. The quality of the meat is also impressive: black pig from Bigorre and Bresse chicken. Luscious desserts.

DOLE La Chaumière P 🚸 ⛱ €€€€

346 mal-Juin, 39100 ***Tel*** *03 84 70 72 40* ***Fax*** *03 84 79 25 60*

You need an open mind and a curious nature to enjoy the cuisine at this delightful, elegant restaurant. There are creative, unusual dishes such as veal accompanied by an almond sauce, stuffed dates, shallot confit, and potato butter, or red tuna with wild watercress, and olive sorbet. Take the plunge. Rooms available.

FONTANGY Ferme auberge de la Morvandelle P 🚸 ♿ €€

Précy-sous-Thil, 21390 ***Tel*** *03 80 84 33 32*

This is a working farm, open to guests only at the weekend. The dining area is in a converted barn, providing an authentic countryside experience. The farm supplies many of the ingredients for its homemade dishes such as chicken liver salad, roast guinea fowl, and fruit tarts. Reserve ahead.

GEVREY-CHAMBERTIN Chez Guy ▤ ⛱ 🍷 €€€

3 pl de la Mairie, 21220 ***Tel*** *03 80 58 51 51* ***Fax*** *03 80 58 50 39*

A charming little restaurant with exposed oak beams, and a terrace for fine days. Simple local cuisine such as *coq au vin* and hearty *joue de bœuf*; both cooked slowly in red wine. Or more contemporary dishes, such as tuna marinated in balsamic vinegar with *piment d'Espelette*. A good selection of wines fairly priced. Good service.

IGUERANDE La Colline du Colombier P 🚸 ♿ ⛱ €€€

Colombier, 71340 ***Tel*** *03 85 84 07 24*

Michel and Marie-Pierre Troisgros have renovated this ancient farmhouse, which looks down over the surrounding countryside and village. The cuisine focuses on local beef and veal, and organic produce. Simple, modern dishes are prepared with care and served in a charmingly rustic dining room.

LONS-LE-SAUNIER Le Relais des Salines 🚸 €

26 rue des Salines, 39000 ***Tel*** *03 84 49 01 57*

In the heart of the Jura lies this lively brasserie dishing up hearty mountain favorites in a friendly animated dining room. Satisfying dishes focus on meat, cheese, and potatoes. There is a good selection of salads, too. The Jura Chardonnays, Poulsards, and Savagnins make a welcome appearance, sold by the pitcher or glass.

MAGNY-COURS Absolue Renaissance P 🚸 ▤ ♿ ⛱ €€

2 rue de Paris, 58470 ***Tel*** *03 86 58 10 40*

Paces away from the Formula One circuit, this restaurant sits in a vast garden, with its own vegetable patch. Menus consist of classic dishes that have been revived with a contemporary flourish. Expect to find tasty options such as Jerusalem artichoke *vol-au-vents*, mussels in curry sauce, and *onglet de boeuf* served with a red onion butter.

MALBUISSON Le Bon Acceuil P 🚸 €€

Rue de la Source, 25160 ***Tel*** *03 81 69 30 58*

This cheerful, colorful restaurant is one of the most inventive kitchens in the Haut-Doubs, and at a very reasonable price, too. The menus change seasonally but expect to find creative dishes like fillet of pike-perch flavored with absinthe, or roast partridge with figs. The sommelière is knowledgeable about Jura wines. Reservations recommended.

MONTFAUCON La Cheminée P 🚸 ♿ ⛱ €€

3 rue de la Vue des Alpes, 25660 ***Tel*** *03 81 81 17 48*

As the address suggests the Alpine scenery around the restaurant is spectacular. Located just a few kilometers from Besançon, this auberge with its comfortable rustic dining room is full of charm. Tasty dishes are based on local produce. Specialties include panfried veal kidneys accompanied with a red wine reduction and crushed potatoes.

NEVERS Jean-Michel Couron ▤ 🍷 €€€€

21 rue St-Etienne, 58000 ***Tel*** *03 86 61 19 28* ***Fax*** *03 86 36 02 96*

Intimate, elegant restaurant, attentive service, and remarkable cuisine. Well-mastered dishes using the best produce to create perfectly balanced flavors in dishes such as veal cutlet panfried with onion confiture and served with a walnut risotto. Inventive desserts and good wines by the glass, too.

NITRY Auberge de la Beursaudière €€

Chemin de Ronde, 89310 ***Tel*** *03 86 33 69 69* ***Fax*** *03 86 33 69 60*

A typical Morvan welcome awaits here, where the staff wear peasant costume. The portions are generous. The menu includes *andouillette de Clamecy* (tripe sausage), veal hock, *corniotte Morvandelle* (cheese filled pastry), *côte de bœuf*, and *tournedos* (thick medallion of beef). Rooms available.

NUITS-ST-GEORGES L'Alambic €€

Rue de Général de Gaulle, 21700 ***Tel*** *03 80 61 35 00*

In this celebrated wine village lies L'Alambic with a menu of 450 different wines, 75 of which are Nuits-St-Georges. On the culinary front no real surprises; classic Burgundy dishes are on offer in the attractive vaulted Cisterian dining room. The menu includes *fricassée* of snails, *oeuf en meurette*, and breast of Guinea fowl with a tarragon sauce.

PORT LESNEY Le Bistro Pontarlier €€

Port Lesney, 39600 ***Tel*** *03 84 37 83 27* ***Fax*** *03 84 73 88 88*

One of the best-value restaurants in the region, this bistro is well established in the old schoolhouse of a pretty wine-growing village in the Arbois area. It is associated with the luxury hotel, Château de Germigny, in the same village, with the same chefs and cuisine – but simpler and less expensive. Excellent bistro atmosphere.

PULIGNY-MONTRACHET La Table d'Olivier Leflaive €€€

Pl du Monument, 21190 ***Tel*** *03 80 21 37 65* ***Fax*** *03 80 21 33 94*

Located in a famous wine village, this rustic restaurant is named after its founder, who makes all the wines himself. The restaurant specializes in wine-tasting lunches in which cold meats, Bresse chicken, and Burgundy cheeses are offered alongside wines to taste, such as St-Aubin, Bourgogne Blanc, and Puligny-Montrachet. Reservations required.

QUARRE LES TOMBES Auberge de l'Atre €€€€

Les Lavaults, 89630 ***Tel*** *03 86 32 20 79* ***Fax*** *03 86 32 28 25*

The decorative interior of this restaurant in the Morvan region contrasts with the rustic simplicity of the building. The dining room has an authentic hearth, or *âtre*, and there is an attractive terrace. There are classic dishes, such as roast lamb with rosemary and soufflé flavored with *marc de bourgogne*.

SAULIEU Le Relais Bernard Loiseau €€€€€

2 rue d'Argentine, 21210 ***Tel*** *03 80 90 53 53* ***Fax*** *03 80 64 08 92*

This restaurant remains one of France's best. The chef Patrick Bertron has successfully taken on the challenge, motivated by Mme. Loiseau. There are well-mastered imaginative interpretations of traditional dishes such as panfried scallops served with a truffle *mille-feuille*. Delicious desserts. Extensive wine list.

SENS La Madeleine €€€€€

1 rue Alsace-Lorraine, 89100 ***Tel*** *03 86 65 09 31* ***Fax*** *03 86 95 37 41*

With the two Michelin star rating, here you will find elegant, refined cuisine with great attention to the ingredients. Seasonal menus offer specialties such as *foie gras* with cassis, sea bass, and a gorgeously gooey chocolate mousse with raspberry sauce. Good Chablis and local Irancy wines. Reserve ahead.

ST-AMOUR BELLEVUE L'Auberge du Paradis €€€

Le Plâtre Durand, 71570 ***Tel*** *03 85 37 10 26*

Once a bakery, then a grocer's, now one of the most dynamic restaurants in Burgundy. The chef here oozes enthusiasm and personality. Daring combinations of spices result in exciting dishes such as asparagus with a coriander, mango, lime, garlic, and lemongrass dressing. The pretty dining room is decorated with bright checkered fabrics and Moroccan rugs.

ST PERE SOUS VEZELAY L'Espérance €€€€€

St Père sous Vézelay, 89450 ***Tel*** *03 86 33 39 10* ***Fax*** *03 86 33 26 15*

L'Espérance serves perhaps the greatest food in Burgundy, in an elegant dining room that opens out onto a terrace with superb views. Marc Meneau, one of France's finest chefs, presents modern classics, such as lobster with truffle sauce, green pea and morille soup, and tender succulent Quercy lamb. Classic wine list.

ST-ROMAIN Les Roches €€

Pl de la Mairie, 21190 ***Tel*** *03 80 21 21 63*

Small hotel-restaurant sitting on the main square of this village well known to wine connoisseurs. Plain, no-frills cooking in a dining room to match. Relax with a chilled glass of St-Romain Blanc accompanied with homemade nibbles, then dig into hearty, homely dishes such as the veritable *haché parmentier*. One of the best value places in the region.

TOURNUS Le Restaurant Greuze €€€€

1 rue A Thibaudet, 71700 ***Tel*** *03 85 51 13 52* ***Fax*** *03 85 51 75 42*

Ultraclassic cuisine and decor, the restaurant itself is a monument to a bygone era. Here's the place to enjoy some of the best classic cooking in France, such as snail *tatin*, Bresse chicken, or a succulent steak accompanied by a *cèpe* sabayon. Good Mâcon and Beaujolais wines.

VERDUN-SUR-LE-DOUBS L'Hostellerie Bourguignonne – Didier Denis €€€€

2 av Pdt-Borgeot, 71350 ***Tel*** *03 85 91 51 45* ***Fax*** *03 85 91 53 81*

On the riverbank, in the heart of the countryside, this rustic establishment serves unpretentious, straightforward cooking with local ingredients. They do a very good local Charolais beef fillet, and pike-perch roasted with vanilla and served with polenta flavored with Comté cheese. Excellent wine list.

VENOY Le Moulin de la Coudre €€€

2 rue des Gravottes, La Coudre, 89290 ***Tel*** *03 86 40 23 79*

Near to Auxerre in the heart of the Yonne lies this restored watermill housing a hotel and restaurant. Classic cuisine is prepared with touches of originality; menus change weekly according to seasonal produce and the whim of the chef. In winter, relax with coffee in front of the open fireplace; in summer, enjoy the flower-filled garden.

VILLENEUVE SUR YONNE Auberge La Lucarne aux Chouettes €€€€

7 quai Bretoche, 89500 ***Tel*** *03 86 87 18 26* ***Fax*** *03 86 87 22 63*

Renovated by actress Leslie Caron, this 17th-century inn has a lovely setting by the river Yonne. Dining outside on the terrace is delightful in summer. The dining room is cozy with exposed beams. The menu presents traditional dishes, such as snails and wild mushroom salad.

VILLERS-LE-LAC Le France €€€€

8 pl Cupillard, 25130 ***Tel*** *03 81 68 00 06* ***Fax*** *03 81 68 09 22*

The cuisine here is fine and inventive, full of contrasts but still simple. The chef has his own herb garden outside, and an expansive selection of spices collected during his travels. The dining room is airy and bright. Try the *foie gras* with a tamarind emulsion, Morteau sausage grilled with juniper, or rabbit with honey and ginger. Refreshing sorbets.

VINCELOTTE Auberge des Tilleuils €€€

12 quai de l'Yonne, 82290 ***Tel*** *03 86 42 22 13*

This attractive auberge on the banks of the river serves cuisine that is packed with flavors, not only from Burgundy, but other French regions, too. Dishes include garlic from Arleux, lentils from Puy, and *andouille* from Vire. Try succulent lamb stuffed with polenta and perfumed with Provençale herbs. Good selection of Burgundy wines, especially Irancy.

VONNAS Georges Blanc €€€€€

Pl Marché, 01540 ***Tel*** *04 74 50 90 90* ***Fax*** *04 74 50 08 80*

A popular shrine of cooking with smooth service in a dining room crammed with antiques. The ambience wavers between the refined and the rustic. Inventive cuisine is prepared by M. Blanc and his two sons, including chicken with *foie gras* and turbot accompanied by a champagne sabayon. Excellent wines.

THE MASSIF CENTRAL

ALLEYRAS Le Haut Allier €€€€

Pont d'Alleyras, 43580 ***Tel*** *04 71 57 57 63* ***Fax*** *04 71 57 57 99*

This hotel-restaurant nestled in the Allier gorge is well worth seeking out for its warm welcome and inventive cuisine. Local produce features in traditional dishes such as saddle of lamb, or combines with more exotic flavors in *foie gras* poached with lemongrass and ginger. The set menus represent excellent value.

AUMONT-AUBRAC Restaurant Prouhèze €€€€

2 rte du Languedoc, 48130 ***Tel*** *04 66 42 80 07* ***Fax*** *04 66 42 87 78*

The award-winning chef uses only the freshest ingredients to create elegant and unusual flavors. Menu highlights include *foie gras* parcels served with figs and apples and panfried fillet of Aubrac beef with *morille* mushrooms. Good selection of Languedoc wines. Its sister restaurant, Le Compostelle, serves less expensive country fare.

BELCASTEL Vieux Pont €€€€

Le Bourg, 12390 ***Tel*** *05 65 64 52 29*

This imaginative restaurant lies across a medieval cobbled bridge: the air is fresh and the river burbles beside the stylishly rustic dining room. Dishes are prepared with talent and modernism. Quality produce is used to create dishes such as Mont Royal pigeon with *cèpes* and lamb sweetbreads with arugula. Reservation recommended.

BOUDES La Vigne €€

Pl de la Mairie, 63340 ***Tel*** *04 73 96 55 66*

In the main square of this small wine-making village lies one of the few truly creative restaurants in the region. The chef is constantly seeking out new ideas. Menus change regularly; expect to find dishes such as cod and scallop mousse. The cheeses and desserts are treated with the same attention. Good-value set menus.

BOUSSAC Le Relais Creusois €€€

40 Maison Dieu, rte de la Châtre, 23600 ***Tel*** *05 55 65 02 20* ***Fax*** *05 55 65 13 60*

Do not be put off by the incongruous exterior or the downbeat decor – this is award-winning cuisine. The chef seeks inspiration from far and wide to deliver original dishes, such as prawn brochette with avocado and mango marmelade. Some tables afford views over the beautiful Petite Creuse valley. Phone to make sure it is open. Closed Jan–mid-Mar.

BRIVE-LA-GAILLARDE Chez Francis €€

61 av de Paris, 19100 ***Tel*** *05 55 74 41 72*

Reminiscent of an authentic Parisien bistro, this retro pub has become an institution in Brive. The cuisine is generous and well-prepared. Regional favorites are revisited such as baby squid, Jerusalem artichokes, or sautéed veal and chanterelles with *grosses frites*. Good selection of southern French wines. Reservations recommended.

CLERMONT-FERRAND Le Caveau €€

9 rue Philippe Marcombes, 63000 ***Tel*** *04 73 14 07 03*

Don't be deterred by the uninviting entrance; at the bottom of the simple staircase is a delightful vaulted dining room. Dishes are rustic and traditional. Huge chunks of Salers or Aubrac beef and *coq au vin* make this a meat eater's paradise. Luckily the desserts are not of the same gargantuan proportions. Reserve ahead.

CLERMONT-FERRAND Goûts et Couleurs €€€

6 pl Champgil, 63000 ***Tel*** *04 73 19 37 82*

The geometric 1980s decor is softened by an ancient vaulted ceiling in this former mirror workshop. Modern, inventive cuisine using quality ingredients offers the best value in town. Good choice of both meat and fish dishes. Leave room for delicious desserts, such as warm lemon madeleines with citrus fruit salad and margarita sorbet.

CLERMONT-FERRAND Amphitryon Capucine €€€€

50 rue Fontgiève, 63000 ***Tel*** *04 73 31 38 39*

In this small, wooden-fronted restaurant guests can enjoy the best seasonal local ingredients in a dining room complete with a fireplace and oak beams. Simple dishes, well-prepared without pretention, include a cannelloni of snails and potted chocolate pudding. Good wines from Languedoc and Auvergne.

COLLONGES-LA-ROUGE Auberge Le Prieuré €€

Pl de l'Eglise, 19500 ***Tel*** *05 55 25 41 00*

Typical 18th-century auberge built in the local red stone, with a pretty terrace. Simple, well-prepared classic dishes such as the terrine of *foie gras* and panfried duck breast with strawberry sauce. If you are in a rush, there is a *casse croûte* menu, where the appetizer and main course are served at the same time.

FLORAC La Source du Pêcher €€€

Rue Remuret, 48400 ***Tel*** *04 66 45 03 01* ***Fax*** *04 66 45 28 82*

Charming little restaurant in a converted mill where you can watch the fish jumping while you eat. Regional produce takes pride of place – duck with bilberries, local lamb, Lozère trout, and chestnut-flower honey, depending on the season. Excellent choice of Languedoc wines. Closed from November to Easter.

LAGUIOLE Michel Bras €€€€€

Rte de l'Aubrac, 12210 ***Tel*** *05 65 51 18 20* ***Fax*** *05 65 48 47 02*

A wall of glass overlooks the Aubrac countryside from this 3-star hilltop restaurant. Michel and Sebastien Bras are renowned for their cutting-edge cuisine. The mouthwatering *biscuit tiède de chocolat coulant* topped with ice cream is out of this world. Closed Nov–Easter.

LE PUY-EN-VELAY Lapierre €€

6 rue des Capucins, 43000 ***Tel*** *04 71 09 08 44*

Delightful little restaurant serving creative dishes that make the most of the local produce. Appetizers include a terrine of Puy lentils served with a beetroot-flavored vinaigrette, and warm organic goat's cheese salad. Entrees might be fresh local trout with a butter sauce or veal accompanied by a Velay honey and lime sauce.

LE ROUGET Hôtel des Voyageurs €€

20 av de 15 septembre 1945, 15290 ***Tel*** *04 71 46 10 14* ***Fax*** *04 71 46 93 89*

Situated 16 miles (25 km) southwest of Aurillac is this stone-built Cantal hotel-restaurant serving well-prepared traditional dishes. The reasonably priced *menu du terroir* includes choices such as warm walnut-crusted goat's cheese salad and duck breast with a blueberry sauce. Good selection of wines.

LIMOGES Chez Alphonse €

5 pl de la Motte, 87000 ***Tel*** *05 55 34 34 14* ***Fax*** *05 55 34 34 14*

This lively bistro serves regional cuisine made with fresh ingredients that the chef himself sources daily from the local market. The traditional Limousin dishes are usually meat or fish based; the €20 set menu is excellent value. Generous cheese platter and good chocolate mouse. Reservations recommended. Closed Jul 27–Aug 10; Dec 29–Jan 12; Sun.

LIMOGES Chez François €

Pl de la Motte, 87000 ***Tel*** *05 55 32 32 79* ***Fax*** *05 55 32 87 39*

Unbeatable value and a convivial atmosphere at this restaurant inside Limoges' covered market hall. It is only open at lunchtime. Be sure to get here early for a place at the communal tables – or prepare to wait in line. The food is nothing fancy, but well cooked and tasty. The single, three-course menu changes daily.

LIMOGES L'Amphitryon €€€€

26 rue de la Boucherie, 87000 ***Tel*** *05 55 33 36 39* ***Fax*** *05 55 32 98 50*

Chic contemporary dining space in the heart of old Limoges. The food is sophisticated and the flavors delicate, in keeping with the Limoges porcelain on which it is served. A regular favorite is the fillet of Limousin beef, while desserts center around seasonal fruits.

MILLAU La Braconne €

7 pl Maréchal Foch, 12100 ***Tel*** *05 65 60 30 93*

Under the arcades of a picturesque square is this friendly restaurant with an authentic 13th-century vaulted dining room. The terrace is also attractive with comfy wicker chairs. Classic savory cuisine with specialties like succulent flambéed leg of lamb. The homely atmosphere makes this a relaxing place to stop for a meal.

MONTLUCON Le Grenier à Sel

P 🚸 ☰ ♿ ⛱ 🍸 €€€€

10 rue Ste-Anne, 03100 ***Tel*** *04 70 05 53 79* ***Fax*** *04 70 05 87 91*

This ivy-covered 16th-century mansion has huge fireplaces and an elegant dining room decked out in restful pastel tones. In fine weather, meals may be served on the enchanting terrace. Try *carpaccio* of Charolais steak fillet served with a morille mushroom pastry turnover. Good-value set menus.

MONTSALVY L'Auberge Fleurie

🚸 €€

Pl du Barry, 15120 ***Tel*** *04 71 49 20 02*

A charming ivy-clad auberge with oak beams, an open fireplace, and a rustic feel. The chef places emphasis on the presentation of his creative dishes. The menus change according to seasonal produce with specialties such as a pouch of snails with cabbage, or duck breast panfried in a hazelnut crust.

MOUDEYRES Le Pré Bossu

P ⛱ 🍸 🍷 €€€

Le Bourg, 43150 ***Tel*** *04 71 05 10 70* ***Fax*** *04 71 05 10 21*

Restaurant-with-rooms that is well worth seeking out for the peaceful location and expertly executed cuisine. Many of the herbs and vegetables – including old-fashioned varieties – come from the garden. There is even a vegetarian menu – a rare treat in this corner of France. Dinner only. Closed November to April.

MOULINS Le Trait d'Union

🚸 ☰ ♿ €€€€

16 rue Gambette, 3000 ***Tel*** *04 70 34 24 61*

Upmarket contemporary bistro in the city center serving cuisine that balances classicism and modernism. The young chef, who has worked with some of the country's best, pays hommage to the region with dishes such as juicy roast pigeon, chestnut mousse flavored with verveine, and a selection choice of local goat's cheeses.

MURAT Le Jarrousset

P 🚸 ♿ ⛱ 🍸 €€

Rte de Clermont-Ferrand, 15300 ***Tel*** *04 71 20 10 69* ***Fax*** *04 71 20 15 26*

Surrounded by attractive gardens, just east of Murat, is this discreet restaurant. The chef seeks inspiration from top-quality ingredients, most of them sourced locally. The gastronomic menu changes every season, allowing for lots of creativity.

PUY EN VELAY François Gagnaire

P ☰ ♿ 🍸 🍷 €€€€

4 av Clément Charbonnier, 43000 ***Tel*** *04 71 02 75 55*

Sophisticated restaurant housed in the Hôtel du Parc. The dining room is simply furnished with colorful Raoul Dufy prints lining the walls. The chef is an old master who knows exactly where he's going. He creatively treats local ingredients with a modern twist. Dishes include gazpacho of Puy lentils and Velay lamb with orange zest and coriander.

RODEZ Le Saint-Amans

🚸 ☰ 🍸 €€€€

12 rue de la Madeleine, 12000 ***Tel*** *05 65 68 03 18*

Le Saint-Amans is a long-established restaurant near St-Amans cathedral. This is traditional cooking with sophistication – *aligot* (potato mashed with fresh cheese) with roquefort sauce, and lamb sweetbreads perfumed with orange and served with an onion confit. The intimate dining room will appeal to romantics.

ST-BONNET-LE-FROID Auberge des Cimes

P 🚸 ☰ ♿ 🍸 🍷 €€€€€

Le Bourg, 43290 ***Tel*** *04 71 59 93 72* ***Fax*** *04 71 59 93 40*

The restaurant at the Clos des Cimes hotel recently won its third Michelin star. Depending on the season, you'll feast on roast lamb, pigeon perfumed with verveine, or fragrant mushrooms. Dessert might be a *brochette* of banana with caramelized cherries. Closed January to mid March.

ST-JULIEN-CHAPTEUIL Vidal

P 🚸 ♿ €€

Pl du Marché, 43260 ***Tel*** *04 71 08 70 50* ***Fax*** *04 71 08 40 14*

In a sleepy village surrounded by mountain peaks, the Vidal family runs a convivial restaurant decorated with murals depicting local scenery. Dishes include snail chapon stuffed with veal sweetbreads and truffles or *pot au feu* of *foie gras*. Closed mid-Jan–Feb.

UZERCHE Restaurant Jean Teyssier

P 🚸 ☰ ⛱ €€

Rue du Pont-Turgot, 19140 ***Tel*** *05 55 73 10 05* ***Fax*** *05 55 98 43 31*

A taste of the Mediterranean has come to the Corrèze with dishes such as giant prawn risotto, saddle of roast lamb flavored with Espelette chilli peppers, or baby scallops and chorizo. Wonderful panoramic restaurant with views of the Vezère. Closed mid-Feb–mid-Mar.

VICHY Brasserie du Casino

♿ ⛱ €€

4 rue du Casino, 03200 ***Tel*** *04 70 98 23 06* ***Fax*** *04 70 98 53 17*

A veritable institution on the Vichy restaurant scene, across the road from the Grand Casino. Dine in stylish Art Deco surroundings – all wood and mirrors and big bench-seats – on upscale brasserie fare. *Foie gras* served warm with balsalmic vinegar and raspberry charlotte are among the classics on offer.

VICHY Jacques Decoret

P ☰ ♿ 🍸 🍷 €€€€€

15 rue du Parc, 3200 ***Tel*** *04 70 97 65 06*

This restaurant is continuously improving. Imaginative dishes are prepared with precision. *Foie gras* served with *choucroute* (saurekraut), cooked-to-perfection sea bream in Rivesaltes wine, and pigeon Miéral with a hint of cacao are just some of the dishes that testify to the chef's talent.

THE RHONE VALLEY AND FRENCH ALPS

ANNECY Le Belvédère

P ♿ ⛱ 👔 🍷 €€€€€

7 chemin Belvédère, 74000 ***Tel*** *04 50 45 04 90*

This refurbished dining room has comfy leather chairs, a wonderful view of the lake and a pretty terrace. Appetizing contemporary recipes are prepared with finesse. Dishes such as escalope of poached *foie gras* with cacao, and dark chocolate ganache perfumed with beetroot and raspberry simply explode with flavors.

BOURG-EN-BRESSE Les Quatres Saisons

🧒 🍷 €€

6 rue de le République, 1000 ***Tel*** *04 74 22 01 86*

Friendly, convivial restaurant serving traditional dishes that have been jazzed up with a modern touch. The chef, passionate about both wines and local produce, livens up old favorites: frogs' legs with a dash of balsamic vinegar, chestnut soufflé with a coulis of prunes. Good Rhône and Burgundy wine selection.

CHAMBERY Château de Candie – L'Orangerie

P ⛱ 👔 🍷 €€€€€

Rue de Bois de Candie, Chambéry le Vieux, 73000 ***Tel*** *04 79 96 63 00* ***Fax*** *04 79 96 63 10*

A 14th-century château in its own grounds is the beautiful setting for this elegant restaurant. Classic produce is prepared with a contemporary touch in such dishes as tartare of scallops and truffles, sea bass sashimi, or more rustic Lac Léman féra (local fish) with Savoie ham. Closed 2 weeks Apr & 2 weeks Nov.

CHAMONIX L'Impossible

P 🧒 ☰ €

9 chemin du Cry, Rte des Pélerins, 74400 ***Tel*** *04 50 53 20 36* ***Fax*** *04 50 53 58 91*

A former farmhouse in the Savoyard mountains, there is a strong emphasis here on cheese dishes: *fondue*, *gratins*, and *tartiflette* (a baked dish with potato, cheese, and ham). Traditional meat dishes simply prepared. Plain *entrecôte* and *tournedos* steak can be grilled over the open fire.

CHAMONIX Les Jardins du Mont Blanc

P ♿ ⛱ 👔 🍷 €€

62 Allée du Majestic, 74400 ***Tel*** *04 50 55 35 42*

A mountain hotel offering savory modern Alpine cuisine using the best produce the region can offer. The chef revisits classic dishes, such as salt cod, and prepares them with subtlety and faultless precision. Magnificent desserts, too. It tends to be noisy when there are large groups. Good-value menu at lunchtime.

CHAMONIX Le Hameau Albert 1er

P 🧒 ♿ ⛱ 👔 🍷 €€€€€

119 impasse Montenvers, 74402 ***Tel*** *04 50 53 05 09* ***Fax*** *04 50 55 95 48*

Luxury Savoyard hotel-restaurant in the mountains, with a view of Italy. The superb cooking of Pierre Carrier tempts the palate. The vegetable patch next door provides him with seasonal inspiration with dishes such as steak accompanied by asparagus served with a *vin jaune* butter or a gratin of chard. Good cheese board.

COLLONGES AU MONT D'OR Paul Bocuse

P 🧒 ☰ ♿ 👔 🍷 €€€€€

40 quai de la Plage, 69660 ***Tel*** *04 72 42 90 90* ***Fax*** *04 72 27 85 87*

Paul Bocuse has become an institution for French cooking, and is simply irreplaceable. Try delicacies such as black truffle soup with pastry, or the cooked-to-perfection turbot with its *beurre blanc* sauce, or the legendary gratin of lobster. The wines are also superb. Reserve a table well in advance.

COURCHEVEL Le Chabichou

P 🧒 ♿ ⛱ 👔 🍷 €€€€€

Quartier des Chenus, 73120 ***Tel*** *04 79 08 00 55* ***Fax*** *04 79 08 33 58*

Reserve a table by the huge windows to enjoy views of the mountains. With two Michelin stars, Le Chabichou offers exotic and creative cuisine at one of the most popular restaurants in this extensive resort. Refined ambience and old-school favorites with an elaborate touch, such as *croque monsieur* with lobster.

EVIAN LES BAINS Histoire de Goût

🧒 ☰ ⛱ €

1 av Général Dupas, 74500 ***Tel*** *04 50 70 09 98*

Restaurant and wine bar serving gourmet bistro food. Perch at the zinc-topped bar and choose from over 200 wines, or settle in the elegant vaulted dining room adorned with wrought-iron chandeliers. Good-value menus include a vegetarian option – the *découverte* menu is particularly recommended.

GRENOBLE La Glycine

🧒 ⛱ €€

168 Cours Berriat, 38000 ***Tel*** *04 76 21 95 33*

A rustic dining room is decorated with old plates and posters, and in summer tables are laid out under the famous "glycine" (wisteria). The chef successfully defends his passion for Lyonnais and Mediterranean cuisine. Tasty offerings include classic *ravioles de Romans* in basil sauce, and fillet of cod roasted in a crumble of walnuts and Cantal cheese.

GRENOBLE A Ma Table

☰ €€€

92 cours Jean-Jaurès, 38000 ***Tel*** *04 76 96 77 04* ***Fax*** *04 76 96 77 04*

There are regular changes to the menu, depending on seasonal local produce, at this small prettily decorated restaurant. Well-mastered cuisine shows in dishes such as frogs' legs wrapped in mint leaves, and desserts like the melt-in-your-mouth chocolate *ganache*. Reserve ahead.

GRENOBLE Le Fantin Latour P €€€€

1 rue Général Beylié, 38000 ***Tel*** *04 76 01 00 97*

The presentation at this chic restaurant is extravagant: apéritifs are presented on a bed of wild plants, water is served in prehistoric-style goblets, and the dessert comes decorated with pebbles. The cuisine also breaks down traditional boundaries in using creative combinations of herbs and spices. Dynamic staff, too. Part of a beautiful *hôtel particulier*.

LA CLUSAZ L'Ecuelle de Chez Auguste €

Rte des Aravis, 74220 ***Tel*** *04 50 02 42 03*

This restaurant is located in the bustling center of this popular ski resort. The owner/chef has created a savory menu using products from both the lake and the mountain. Typical dishes includes classics such as aubergine (eggplant) caviar, *foie gras* terrine, and Montremont trout with *cèpes* and cured mountain ham.

LAMASTRE Restaurant Barattéro P €€€€

Pl Seignobos, 07270 ***Tel*** *04 75 06 41 50* ***Fax*** *04 75 06 49 75*

This is an elegant restaurant with an attractive garden at the Hotel Midi in the lovely Ardèche town of Lamastre. Classic cuisine such as panfried *foie gras* salad, crayfish with a richly flavored sauce, and Ardèche chestnut soufflé. The wine list focuses on St-Joseph and St-Péray. Reserve ahead.

LARGENTIÈRE Le Chêne Vert P €€

Rocher, 7110 ***Tel*** *04 75 88 34 02*

Traditional Ardèchois hotel and restaurant situated in the countryside, near Aubenas. Choose from well-prepared regional classics such as *foie gras* served with a fig *confit* or roast rabbit flavored with thyme, accompanied by a *tartiflette* Ardèchoise. To finish, a fruit salad topped by a frothy cream infused with Bourbon vanilla.

LE BOURGET-LE-LAC Beaurivage P €€€

Boulevard du Lac, 73370 ***Tel***

Superbly situated on the banks of the lake, this typical auberge has a dining room opening out onto a lovely terrace overhung with plantain trees. Enjoy classic Savoyard cuisine, grilled lobster, and a risotto flavored with bouillabaisse, and the lake's catch, *lavaret*, grilled and served with a Mondeuse coulis, while enjoying the view.

LE GRAND BORNAND La Ferme de Lormay P €€€

Lormay, 74450 ***Tel*** *04 50 02 24 29*

Chez Albert, as it's known to the regulars, is a delightful authentic Alpine chalet. The delicious Savoyarde cuisine served here includes vegetable soup with smoked ham, and chicken with crayfish. Locally produced cheeses are accompanied by a glass of Mondeuse.

LYON 33 Cité P €€

33 quai Charles de Gaulle, 69006 ***Tel*** *04 37 45 45 45*

Modern city center brasserie facing the Cité Internationale. This stylish dining room offers classic and contemporary cuisine prepared with care; dishes include tuna baguette with wasabi and ginger, ribs of farm-bred pig, and more traditional veal cutlet *en cocotte*. Wines can be ordered by the glass or bottle.

LYON Brasserie Georges €€

30 cour Verdun, 69002 ***Tel*** *04 72 56 54 54* ***Fax*** *04 78 42 51 65*

Huge, bustling city-center bistro with fast service and a splendid Art Deco interior. The extensive menu includes a choice of Lyonnais specialties such as *andouillette* (tripe sausage) and Dauphinoise potatoes, but also a variety of seafood dishes, sauerkraut, and omelet. Good choice for children and vegetarians.

LYON La Gargotte d'Ivan €€

15 rue Royale, 69001 ***Tel*** *04 78 28 79 20*

Just north of the Grand Théâtre lies "Ivan's Canteen," a friendly restaurant with retro decor, Rococo gilding, and mirror-lined walls. The young and talented chef prepares semi-gastronomic dishes at bistro prices. The menus include dishes based on grand classics enlivened with a touch of originality. Small selection of good wines at reasonable prices, too.

LYON L'Alexandrin €€€€

83 rue Moncey, 69003 ***Tel*** *04 72 61 15 69*

The young, gifted chef here creates gourmet Lyonnais dishes. Faultless preparation results in cooked-to-perfection dishes with personality. Pigeon with chorizo slices or filet of bass roasted in a spicy crust give moments of pure pleasure. The same care is taken with the vegetables, including the cocotte of vegetables with chestnuts.

LYON Nicolas le Bec €€€€€

14 rue Grolée, 69002 ***Tel*** *04 78 42 15 00* ***Fax*** *04 72 40 98 97*

Nicolas le Bec prepares inventive cuisine with audacious touches in dishes such as smoked eel accompanied by *foie gras*. The setting is elegant and contemporary, and there's an excellent wine list with a particularly good range of Burgundies, but at a price. Closed 2 weeks Jan & 2 weeks Aug.

MEGEVE La Petite Ravine P €

743 chemin de la Ravine, Demi Quartier Combloux, 74120 ***Tel*** *04 50 21 38 67*

Typical alpine chalet restaurant with a homely, convivial ambience. In winter, skiers stop off to relax and have a bite, in summer hikers settle back to admire the view. The selection of dishes is limited but tasty regional favorites are included: cheese fondue, *croûte au* Beaufort cheese, and salads. Ideal for all the family.

MEGEVE La Taverne du Mont d'Arbois

P ⊞ €€€€

3001 rte Edmond de Rothschild, 74120 ***Tel*** *04 50 21 03 53*

Once a tavern frequented by locals, this authentic chalet now attracts a chic Megève crowd. The chef prepares dishes based on traditional recipes, but adds his own splash of originality. Delicious pumpkin soup with an emulsion of Abondance cheese, and féra fish from Lac Léman with rye butter.

MORZINE La Chamade

🚸 ♿ ⊞ €€

Morzine, 74110 ***Tel*** *04 50 79 13 91* ***Fax*** *04 50 79 27 48*

Traditional Alpine family-run restaurant with a wide menu. Pizzas cooked in wood-fired ovens, cheese platters, and regional fare such as piglet and *charcuterie* (cold meats). Good selection of appetizers including warm Reblochon salad, marinated salmon and duck breast salad, and chocolate paradise for dessert.

ROANNE La Troisgros

P 🚸 ▤ ♿ 👔 🍷 €€€€€

Pl Jean Troisgros, 42300 ***Tel*** *04 77 71 66 97* ***Fax*** *04 77 70 39 77*

La Troisgros is one of the most prestigious restaurants in France, with elegant contemporary decor. Sit in the dining room with its pure lines and zen atmosphere and feast on delights such as red mullet perfumed with tamarind. There is also a specialized food library.

ST-AGREVE Domaine de Rilhac

P 🚸 ♿ €€€€

Rilhac, 07320 ***Tel*** *04 75 30 20 20* ***Fax*** *04 75 30 20 00*

Located in a peaceful corner of the Ardèche, in this recently renovated farmhouse, chef Ludovic Sinz creates classic dishes with an innovative approach. On the menu there is a choice of *foie gras* with creamed potatoes and grilled walnuts, saddle of lamb with aubergine (eggplant) caviar, and to finish a chocolate sorbet with orange coulis.

ST-ETIENNE La Mandragore

🚸 €€

15 rue des Martyrs de Vingré, 42000 ***Tel*** *04 77 38 50 70*

Situated in the St-Jacques quarter, occupying one of the oldest buildings on the street. The dining room is cozy and intimate with ancient stone walls and contemporary prints. In the style of a gourmet bistro, the chef concocts tasty, creative Mediterranean-inspired cuisine. The menu changes monthly. Popular with the locals so reservations recommended.

ST-MARTIN-DE-BELLEVILLE La Bouitte

P 🚸 ⊞ 👔 €€€€€

St Marcel, 73440 ***Tel*** *04 79 08 96 77* ***Fax*** *04 79 08 96 03*

In a charming Alpine chalet, this restaurant serves inventive dishes using regional Alpine herbs. Try the tantalizing quail with truffles and artichoke. There is also a very good selection of cheese and desserts. Cooking courses are available.

TAIN L'HERMITAGE Lycée Hotelier de l'Hermitage

P €

Rue Jean Monnet, 26600 ***Tel*** *04 75 07 57 14*

On the outskirts of this famous wine-making town lies this training college for aspiring chefs, waiters, and sommeliers. The students run two restaurants serving classic gourmet dishes. Each Thursday, the evenings have a chosen theme. The menu changes constantly and the prices include an apéritif and wine. Only open when school is in session.

TALLOIRES La Villa des Fleurs

P 🚸 ⊞ €€€

Rte du Port, 74290 ***Tel*** *04 50 60 71 14* ***Fax*** *04 50 60 74 06*

The cuisine at this charming stone-built house set in its own grounds focuses on fish caught in Lake d'Annecy, a stone's throw away. Try the succulent local féra fish, or the poached trout. Traditional regional dishes are also served. Dine outside with a view of the lake in fine weather. Pleasant service. Rooms available.

TOURNON Le Tournesol

🚸 ⊞ 🍷 €€

44 av Maréchal Foch, 07300 ***Tel*** *04 75 07 08 26* ***Fax*** *04 75 07 08 26*

Chic restaurant near the riverside with a panoramic view of the Hermitage vineyards. The interior is smart and contemporary, and the young chef shows his originality in dishes such as *foie gras* with fig chutney, or bass fillet panfried with almond oil. Homemade desserts. Well-chosen wines.

URIAGE-LES-BAINS Les Terrasses d'Uriage

P ▤ 👔 🍷 €€€€€

Pl de la Déesse-Hygie, 38410 ***Tel*** *04 76 89 10 80*

Located in a typical thermal resort is this dynamic restaurant offering interesting, innovative dishes with a touch of eccentricity. The elegant dining room in a Napoleon III building opens out onto a lovely park. Savor dishes such as *confit* of duckling served with an unctuous polenta. Desserts are wonderful, too, and there's a vast choice of wines.

VALENCE Restaurant Pic

P 🚸 ▤ ♿ ⊞ 👔 🍷 €€€€€

285 av Victor Hugo, 26000 ***Tel*** *04 75 44 15 32* ***Fax*** *04 75 40 96 03*

Refined restaurant with inspirational cuisine in a luxurious hotel. Lobster with red fruit and berries, celery and green pepper has enhanced the reputation of this constantly evolving, nonconventional establishment. Great Rhône wines. The restaurant runs cooking courses.

VIENNE La Pyramide

P ▤ ♿ ⊞ 👔 🍷 €€€€

14 bd Fernand Point, 38200 ***Tel*** *04 74 53 01 96*

One of France's classic Michelin-starred hotel-restaurant establishments. Professionalism reigns supreme in the dining room and kitchen. Gastronomic creations are based on regional produce; choices include violet artichoke with vegetable filled ravioli, succulent pigeon breast with Swiss chard, and classic steamed lobster. Superb selection of Rhône wines.

Key to Price Guide *see p600* **Key to Symbols** *see back cover flap*

POITOU & AQUITAINE

ANGOULEME Le Terminus €€€

3 pl de la Gare, 16000 ***Tel*** *05 45 95 27 13* ***Fax*** *05 45 94 04 09*

Chic, modern restaurant where good food, prompt service, and well-priced menus make up for the location on a busy main road. Ultrafresh seafood takes pride of place, with particular mention of the mixed fish grill and Spanish *fricassée* of monkfish. Leave room for one of the wicked desserts.

ARCACHON Chez Yvette €€

59 bd du Général Leclerc, 33120 ***Tel*** *05 56 83 05 11* ***Fax*** *05 56 22 51 62*

Seafood doesn't come much fresher than at this venerable Arcachon restaurant run by former oyster farmers. Success stories include lamprey *à la bordelaise* (eel-like fish cooked in wine) and roast turbot, but it is hard to resist the spectacular seafood platters. It's wise to reserve a table.

ARCINS Le Lion d'Or €€

11 rte de Pauillac, 33460 ***Tel*** *05 56 58 96 79*

A small and welcoming village auberge in the heart of the Médoc vineyards north of Margaux. Loved by locals who appreciate the traditional seasonal cooking. Local Pauillac lamb is a springtime favorite, while in fall the accent is on game. No fixed menus, but prices remain reasonable.

BORDEAUX Bistrot d'Edouard €

16 pl du Parlement, 33000 ***Tel*** *05 56 81 48 87* ***Fax*** *05 56 48 51 74*

On one of Bordeaux's prettiest squares, this fuss-free bistro offers a broad range of inexpensive fixed-price menus. Don't expect gourmet dining, but the food is reliable, covering everything from salads, omelets, vegetarian dishes, and fish to regional specialties. Outside dining in summer.

BORDEAUX Le Café du Musée €€

Musée d'Art Contemporain, 7 rue Ferrère, 33000 ***Tel*** *05 56 44 71 61* ***Fax*** *05 57 95 81 70*

Splendid lunch spot on top of the contemporary art museum. Modern decor complements stylish dishes ranging from *foie gras* and oysters to duck spring rolls and sashimi. The Sunday buffet is a must on the Bordeaux scene. Also serves coffee, desserts, and light meals until 6pm.

BORDEAUX La Tupina €€€

6 rue Porte de la Monnaie, 33800 ***Tel*** *05 56 91 56 37* ***Fax*** *05 56 31 92 11*

The heart of La Tupina is the open fire over which succulent meats are grilled and in winter a cauldron of soup bubbles away. This is an excellent place to try bordelais specialties such as lamprey in wine, grilled shad, or baby eels cooked in olive oil with garlic and hot pepper. Simple, old-fashioned desserts.

CELLES-SUR-BELLE Hostellerie de l'Abbaye €€

1 pl des Epoux-Laurant, 79370 ***Tel*** *05 49 32 93 32* ***Fax*** *05 49 79 72 65*

Hotel-restaurant in a charming medieval village. The setting, in particular the beautifully tended courtyard garden, is especially alluring. From the open kitchens come elegant dishes such as *filet mignon*, or try the roast lamb with courgette (zucchini) and Parmesan gâteau. Friendly, discreet service.

COGNAC Les Pigeons Blancs €€€€

110 rue Jules-Brisson, 16100 ***Tel*** *05 45 82 16 36* ***Fax*** *05 45 82 29 29*

Owned by the same family since the 17th century, this former post house is renowned for its excellent service, wine, and food. The popular daily menu really does change every day. Veal sweetbreads with an aged red Pineau sauce and a glass of VSOP cognac is a sure-fire winner. Fabulous dessert trolley.

COULON Le Central €€

4 rue d'Autremont, 79510 ***Tel*** *05 49 35 90 20* ***Fax*** *05 49 35 81 07*

A deservedly popular hotel-restaurant in the Marais. Indulge yourself with original dishes such as snail *cassoulet* or rabbit lasagne. More traditional fare includes *foie gras* and lamb with lashings of herbs and garlic – an absolute classic. Portions are generous. Reserve ahead. Closed Feb.

EUGENIE-LES-BAINS La Ferme aux Grives €€€€

111 rue Thermes, 40320 ***Tel*** *05 58 05 05 06* ***Fax*** *05 58 51 10 10*

The more "rustic" of Michel Guérard's much acclaimed restaurants still serves sublime food. Normally heavy southwestern dishes are reinvented for a modern palate, such as oysters served with ginger shavings and fresh cilantro accompanied by a "chantilly" of green tea.

GRENADE-SUR-L'ADOUR Pain Adour et Fantaisie €€€€

14-16 pl des Tilleuls, 40270 ***Tel*** *05 58 45 18 80* ***Fax*** *05 58 45 16 57*

Elegant, Michelin-starred restaurant run by a former pupil of Michel Guérard. Trademark dishes include duck *foie gras* flavored with local *jurançon* wine and juniper. Fish and seafood changes with the seasons. Good-value lunch menu, and a romantic riverside terrace for summer dining.

ILE D'OLORON L'Ecailler €€

65 rue du Port, La Cotiniere, 17310 ***Tel*** *05 46 47 10 31*

On the west coast of the island, looking toward La Cotinière harbor is this hotel and restaurant, which inevitably specializes in seafood, including lobster from its own tank. Other choices on the menu include grilled fish and meat dishes such as the rib steak with coarse sea salt. A terrace and patio-garden allow for outdoor dining.

JARNAC Restaurant du Château €€€

15 pl du Château, 16200 ***Tel*** *05 45 81 07 17* ***Fax*** *05 45 35 35 71*

This restaurant near Château Courvoisier is renowned throughout the Cognac region for producing quality regional cuisine. Highlights are the tartare of langoustines and scallops with a mango vinaigrette, guinea fowl with a morille stuffing served with eggplant caviar, and a Cognac-laced soufflé for dessert with a Cognac digestif to round things off.

LA ROCHELLE Le Boute en Train €

7 rue des Bonnes Femmes, 17000 ***Tel*** *05 46 41 73 74* ***Fax*** *05 46 45 90 76*

You are assured a warm welcome at this lively French bistro where all the fresh foodstuffs come from the nearby market. This means a great choice of daily dishes and a menu that changes with the seasons. Fortunately, the chocolate mousse is a standard. Reserve ahead.

LA ROCHELLE Le Comptoir des Voyages €€

22 rue St-Jean du Perot, 17000 ***Tel*** *05 46 50 62 60* ***Fax*** *05 46 41 90 80*

A new addition to the Coutanceau stable, this time with a colonial theme – potted palms, rattan chairs, and flavors from around the world. From the single menu you might start with a carpaccio of red tuna with a tartare of vegetables, followed by saddle of lamb cooked in Guinness, and, for dessert, chocolate pizza. Simply sublime.

LANGON Claude Darroze €€€€

95 cours du Général-Leclerc, 33210 ***Tel*** *05 56 63 00 48* ***Fax*** *05 56 63 41 15*

Inside this unassuming hotel-restaurant you'll find wonderfully over-the-top decor and some of the region's best food and wine. Depending on the season, you might be regaled with a hearty stew of lamprey eels served with leeks and a stunning Grand Marnier soufflé, light as air. There's an extensive wine list with a choice of more than 600 wines.

MIMIZAN Hôtel Atlantique €€

38 av de la Côte d'Argent, 40200 ***Tel*** *05 58 09 09 42* ***Fax*** *05 58 82 42 63*

Very popular, modestly priced restaurant in a hotel on the seafront at the north end of the beach. Seafood is a specialty, with good *soupe de poisson* as well as regional gastronomic favorites such as *magret de canard, confit de canard*, and wild boar with prunes.

MONT-DE-MARSAN Didier Garbage €€€€

RN 134, Uchacq-et-Parentis, 40090 ***Tel*** *05 58 75 33 66* ***Fax*** *05 58 75 22 77*

One of France's up-and-coming chefs turns out authentic landaise cuisine in his convivial, slightly rustic restaurant outside Mont-de-Marsan. Look forward to lamprey, elvers (freshwater eels), and expertly crafted fish dishes, in addition to meats and luscious desserts. There's also a bistro for casual dining.

MONTMORILLON Le Lucullus €€

4 bd de Strasbourg, 86500 ***Tel*** *05 49 84 09 09* ***Fax*** *05 49 84 58 68*

A traditional country auberge where the food takes precedence. The set menus change frequently and present plenty of choice, including a vegetarian option. Sample crab and asparagus flan or pork with *foie gras* sauce. The attached brasserie offers cheaper, less formal dining.

NIORT La Table des Saveurs €€

9 rue Thiers, 79000 ***Tel*** *05 49 77 44 35* ***Fax*** *05 49 16 06 29*

Despite its town-center location and classy cuisine, this popular restaurant offers excellent value for money. Even the cheapest menu includes three courses. This is regional cooking, which means plenty of fish dishes, such as a langoustine crumble or duo of pike-perch and red mullet.

PAULLIAC Château Cordeillan-Bages €€€€€

61 rue Vignerons, 33250 ***Tel*** *05 56 59 24 24* ***Fax*** *05 56 59 01 89*

This popular restaurant in the heart of Bordeaux's vineyards is aspiring to its third Michelin star. The Pauillac lamb is a signature dish, representing traditional cuisine; the molecular cuisine proposes dishes such as hot oyster soufflé and crispy sea water. Well worth a splurge.

POITIERS Les Bons Enfants €

11 bis rue Cloche-Perse, 86000 ***Tel*** *05 49 41 49 82* ***Fax*** *05 49 46 05 38*

A charming restaurant decorated with souvenirs from the classroom and old school photographs. The cuisine is traditional with favorites such as veal with girolle mushrooms and shallots, and chocolate mousse. The portions are generous and service is cheerful, but the tables are packed close together in the small dining room. Reserve ahead.

POITIERS Le Pince Oreille €€

11 rue des trois rois, 8600 ***Tel*** *05 49 60 25 99*

Live music – including jazz, blues, and swing – is as much of an attraction as the food and drink in this city-center "café-concert-restaurant." The menu concentrates on straightforward specialties, notably meat, fish, and vegetables grilled *à la plancha,* Brazilian-style to make them crusty and caramelized. Wine tasting events are also held here.

ROCHEFORT La Belle Poule €€€

Rte de Royan, 17300 ***Tel*** *05 46 99 71 87* ***Fax*** *05 46 83 99 77*

A modern building made more agreeable thanks to a massive fireplace and lots of greenery. The chef uses herbs and spices to splendid effect in his regionally inspired dishes. Favorites include roast pigeon with stuffed cabbage, and roast scallops perfumed with vanilla.

ROYAN La Jabotière ♿ €€

Esplanade de Pontaillac, 17200 ***Tel*** *05 46 39 91 29* ***Fax*** *05 46 38 39 93*

Modern cuisine in a renovated beachfront restaurant. Sample carpaccio of scallops marinated in lime juice and orange confit or fricassée of veal sweetbreads served with a sweet potato gratin, finishing with an apple and apricot soufflé. In summer, the terrace is packed with customers enjoying the excellent lunch deals.

SABRES Auberge des Pins P ♿ €€

Rte de la Piscine, 40630 ***Tel*** *05 58 08 30 00* ***Fax*** *05 58 07 56 74*

Gorgeous landaise farmhouse run by an adorable family. The oak-lined dining room provides the perfect setting for typical landaise cuisine, ranging from flavorful asparagus and fresh fish to duck in all its guises. Best of all, though, is the boned pigeon stuffed with *foie gras*. Good selection of local wines and armagnac.

SAINTES Relais du Bois St-Georges P ♿ €€€€€

Parc Atlantique, 132 Cours Genet, 17100 ***Tel*** *05 46 93 50 99* ***Fax*** *05 46 93 34 93*

Two first-class restaurants, part of a hotel on the outskirts of Saintes in big, beautiful grounds with lawns, a tennis court, an indoor pool, a lake, a croquet lawn, and piano bar. The gastronomic restaurant serves excellent seafood. The bistro, La Table du Bois, is much cheaper, serving good local dishes.

ST-EMILION L'Envers du Décor ♿ €€

11 rue du Clocher, 33330 ***Tel*** *05 57 74 48 31* ***Fax*** *05 57 24 68 90*

Local vignerons rub shoulders with tourists in this delightful little bistro-cum-wine bar. The menu runs the gamut from omelets and salads to more elaborate regional dishes, or you can choose from daily specials on the chalkboard. Winner of the award for the best wine list in France in its class.

ST-MARTIN-DE-RE La Baleine Bleue ♿ €€

Quai Launay Razilly, Ilot du Port, 17410 ***Tel*** *05 46 09 03 30* ***Fax*** *05 56 09 30 86*

The fish couldn't be much fresher at this celebrated portside restaurant. Menus change daily depending on the catch, but typical offerings are scallop carpaccio, home-smoked salmon, and cod with lemon confit. For dessert, try the roast figs with spicy ice cream. Closed Jan.

TALMONT L'Estuaire P €

1 av de L'Estuaire, 17120 ***Tel*** *05 46 90 43 85*

Situated beside the Gironde estuary (as the name suggests), this restaurant is a short way from the preserved old village of Talmont and its remarkable clifftop church. The menu is particularly strong on traditional fish and seafood dishes. It is also a bar, tearoom, and seven-room hotel.

PERIGORD, QUERCY & GASCONY

AGEN Mariottat P ♿ €€€€

25 rue Louis-Vivent, 47000 ***Tel*** *05 53 77 99 77* ***Fax*** *05 53 77 99 79*

It comes as a surprise to find this elegant restaurant tucked down a very ordinary backstreet, but inside the 19th-century mansion, with its chandeliers and high ceilings, you're in for a treat. Duck reigns supreme – *assiette tout canard* is the signature dish, alongside succulent Agen prunes and summer fruits.

ALBI Le Jardin des Quatre Saisons P ♿ €€

19 bd de Strasbourg, 81000 ***Tel*** *05 63 60 77 76* ***Fax*** *05 63 60 77 76*

A gourmet restaurant that won't break the bank, here there are just three menus, each with a wide selection of dishes. At Le Jardin des Quatre the cooking is very much seasonal, but among the regular favorites you'll find *foie gras* in various guises, seafood *pot au feu*, and roast pigeon.

ALBI Le Vieil Alby €€

23-25 rue Toulouse-Lautrec, 81000 ***Tel*** *05 63 38 28 23*

This welcoming and well-priced hotel-restaurant is a good place to try typical local dishes, such as a raddish and pork liver salad, followed by *cassoulet*, or perhaps tripe cooked Albi-style. All desserts are homemade. In warm weather, dine in the lovely interior courtyard with its retractable roof.

AUCH Le Papillon €€

Carrefour de l'Arçon "Au Petit Guilhem", Montaut-les-Creneaux, 32810 ***Tel*** *05 52 65 51 29*

There are some lovely after-lunch walks to be had from this restaurant, which sits in a small village northeast of Auch. Choose from four set menus or *à la carte*, which offers homemade cassoulet, *foie gras*, and good fish and seafood options. A small garden has swings for children.

BERGERAC La Flambée €€

Rte de Périgeux, 49 av Marceau-Fevry, 24100 ***Tel*** *05 53 57 52 23*

Depending on which of the three set menus you choose, you could opt for smoked herring, smoked salmon, oysters, *foie gras*, or mango and avocado salad for an appetizer. A good entree to select is the lamb curry. Desserts include apple crumble. Also a very relaxing hotel with swimming pool.

BRANTOME Les Frères Charbonnel P ♿ €€€

57 rue Gambetta, 24310 ***Tel*** *05 53 05 70 15* ***Fax*** *05 53 05 71 85*

The restaurant of the Hôtel Chabrol has a well deserved reputation for its upscale regional cuisine and excellent service. Black périgord truffles add style to omelets and to the house special, pike-perch *vol-au-vent*. These can be enjoyed in the dining room, or on the riverside terrrace. Closed Feb.

BRANTOME Le Moulin de l'Abbaye P €€€€

1 rte de Bourdeilles, 24310 ***Tel*** *05 53 05 80 22* ***Fax*** *05 53 05 75 27*

Dine in luxury on innovative dishes such as duck *foie gras* poached in walnut liqueur, or grilled pigeon flavored with almond oil and Jamaican pepper. Luscious desserts might include a gratin of strawberries with white chocolate. A magical setting and impeccable service. Closed Nov–Apr.

CAHORS Auberge du Vieux Cahors ♿ €€

144 rue St Urcisse, 46000 ***Tel*** *05 65 35 06 05*

Regional cuisine is the focus of the menu in this 15th-century auberge in the historical town center of Cahors. Specialties include duck *foie gras*, beef carpaccio flavored with truffle, Burgundy snails, and a wide choice of fish dishes. There are a few terrace tables for outdoor dining.

CAHORS Le Balandre P €€€€

5 av Charles-de-Freycinet, 46000 ***Tel*** *05 65 53 32 00* ***Fax*** *05 65 53 32 26*

For fine dining in Cahors, head for the restaurant in the Hôtel Terminus, where 1930s decor complements refined Quercy cuisine. Rustic dishes, such as roast Quercy lamb laced with juniper juice, are given a modern twist. Or try duck cannelloni served with walnut *rillette*. Cahors wines feature strongly.

CASTRES Café du Pont €€

Les Salvages, 81100 ***Tel*** *05 63 35 08 21*

Les Salvages lies about 4-miles (6-km) northeast of Castres *en route* to the scenic rock formations of the Sidobre. This restaurant has a shady terrace on the bank of the River Agout. Seasonal ingredients and local produce predominate on the menu. Upstairs there are five guest bedrooms.

CHAMPAGNAC-DE-BELAIR Le Moulin du Roc €€€€

Champagnac-de-Belair, 24530 ***Tel*** *05 53 02 86 00* ***Fax*** *05 53 54 21 31*

A romantic waterside setting plus top-notch cuisine make this gourmet restaurant stand out. The lunch menu (not served on Sundays) offers particularly good value. Iced garden herb soup and roast breast of guinea fowl with *foie gras* are just two of the treats in store.

CONDOM La Table des Cordeliers €€€

1 rue des Cordeliers, 32100 ***Tel*** *05 62 68 43 82* ***Fax*** *05 62 28 15 92*

Modern cuisine using top-quality local produce is prepared with talent at this contemporary restaurant housed in the cloisters of a 13th-century convent. Depending on the season, enjoy *cèpe* mushroom *tartelette*, succulent duck, and an apple dessert accompanied by iced nougat with prunes. Good choice of regional wines and armagnacs.

CORDES-SUR-CIEL Bistrot Tonin'ty €€

Hostellerie du Vieux Cordes, Haut de la Cité, 81170 ***Tel*** *05 63 53 79 20*

One of several restaurants and hotels in the medieval town of Cordes that are owned by master *pâtissier* Yves Thuries. There is an enchanting courtyard shaded by an ancient wisteria and, in summer, tables are also set out on the terrace overlooking the valley. The menu focuses on salmon and duck.

DOMME L'Esplanade €€€€

Le Bourg, 24250 ***Tel*** *05 53 28 31 41* ***Fax*** *05 53 28 49 92*

Welcoming and efficient service, well-presented dishes and an unbeatable panorama of the Dordogne valley keep customers coming back to this hotel restaurant. Ask for a window or terrace table. Signature dishes include goose breast with ginger, and the delectable chocolate trilogy.

FIGEAC La Cuisine du Marché €€

15 rue Clermont, 46100 ***Tel*** *05 65 50 18 55* ***Fax*** *05 65 50 18 55*

In a former wine cellar in the heart of Figeac's medieval core, this attractive restaurant takes pride in using only the freshest ingredients. Star billing goes to its wide range of fish dishes, though you'll also find plenty of local classics all prepared in the open kitchen. The set menus represent good value.

FOURCES Château de Fources P €

32250 ***Tel*** *05 62 29 49 53*

Fources is one of Gascony's most delightful villages. Its Renaissance château, beside the river, is now a hotel-restaurant where you can dine in a magnificent dining room with broad stone walls or at shaded tables outside. The hotel boasts palatial rooms, some with four-poster beds.

FRANCESCAS Le Relais de la Hire 🚸 ☂ 🍸 🍷 €€€€

11 rue Porte-Neuve, 47600 ***Tel*** *05 53 65 41 59* ***Fax*** *05 53 65 86 42*

The chef of this upmarket village restaurant near Nérac makes full use of his herb garden and edible flowers to create dishes that are a feast for all the senses. Try the temping artichoke soufflé with *foie gras* or oriental-flavored roast turbot with caramelized onions, followed by desserts that look almost too good to eat.

GAILLAC Les Sarments 🚸 ♿ 🍷 €€€

27 rue Cabrol, 81600 ***Tel*** *05 63 57 62 61* ***Fax*** *05 63 57 62 61*

The brick arches and exposed beams of this 14th-century wine vault in the heart of old Gaillac provide a striking setting for the beautifully presented food that tends toward the traditional, but with imaginative touches. Particularly fine desserts. Good opportunity to sample Gaillac wines at reasonable prices.

ISSIGEAC La Brucelière ☂ €€

Place de la Capelle, 24560 ***Tel*** *05 53 73 89 61*

In a charming village 9 miles (15 km) from Bergerac is this former coaching inn with a traditional dining room. The menu includes regional produce, with a particular emphasis on seafood such as lobster and crayfish. The dishes are creative, with a touch of exoticism, and the atmosphere is relaxed. A spacious, shady terrace overlooks the garden.

LACAVE Le Pont de l'Ouysse 🚸 ≡ ♿ ☂ 🍸 🍷 €€€€€

Le Pont de l'Ouysse, 46200 ***Tel*** *05 65 37 87 04* ***Fax*** *05 65 32 77 41*

A chic restaurant-with-rooms not far from Rocamadour. It's in a lovely riverside setting, sheltered under an imposing cliff. Inventive variations on local dishes include casserole of duck liver with Paimpol beans. There are good-value lunch menus, but it is magical dining under the trees at night.

LES EYZIES-DE-TAYAC Le Vieux Moulin P 🚸 ☂ 🍸 🍷 €€€

2 rue du Moulin-Bas, 24620 ***Tel*** *05 53 06 94 33* ***Fax*** *05 53 06 98 06*

Dine on well-priced regional cuisine in a 17th-century mill, with its rustic interior, or beside the river in peaceful, flower-filled gardens. Among the simple but beautifully prepared dishes, choose from *escalope* of *foie gras* with truffle sauce or truffle risotto, with pigeon casserole to follow. Closed Nov–Apr.

MANCIET La Bonne Auberge P 🚸 ☂ 🍸 🍷 €€

Pl du Pesquerot, 32370 ***Tel*** *05 62 08 50 04* ***Fax*** *05 62 08 58 84*

The same family has been running this small hotel-restaurant for 40 years, and it shows in the quality of the creative southwestern cuisine. The platter of local specialties is a great introduction to Gascon fare, and menus change regularly. Fabulous armagnac list – some over 100 years old.

MARMANDE Le Moulin d'Ane P 🚸 ♿ ☂ €€

Virazeil, 47200 ***Tel*** *05 53 20 18 25*

Consistently excellent seasonal cuisine in this restored 18th-century watermill near Marmande. Typical southwestern dishes include succulent blonde d'Aquitaine beef, tender fillets of duck breast, and apple tart laced with armagnac. Be sure to try the exceptionally plump and juicy Marmande tomatoes.

MONBAZILLAC La Tour des Vents P 🚸 ☂ €€€

Moulin de Malfourat, 24240 ***Tel*** *05 53 58 30 10* ***Fax*** *05 53 58 89 55*

Reserve a window or terrace table to enjoy the wonderful views over the Dordogne valley to Bergerac. Good-value menus offer local specialties, including *foie gras* and duck, but also fish and seafood. There is even a vegetarian option. Treat yourself to a glass of sweet Monbazillac with *foie gras* or dessert. Closed Jan.

MONTAUBAN Au Fil de l'Eau €€€

14 quai de Dr Lafforgue, 82000 ***Tel*** *05 63 66 11 85* ***Fax*** *05 63 91 97 56*

An ancient building housing a spacious modern restaurant on the banks of the river. The menu is composed of traditional dishes such as panfried *foie gras* accompanied by gingerbread, *omelet aux truffes*, and duckling served with a rich red wine sauce. Good regional wines.

PERIGUEUX Le Clos Saint-Front 🚸 ≡ ☂ 🍸 €€

5 rue de la Vertu, 24000 ***Tel*** *05 53 46 78 58* ***Fax*** *05 53 46 78 20*

Reservations are recommended at this restaurant near Périgueux's prehistory museum, with its inventive, inexpensive cuisine and peaceful courtyard garden. According to the season, you could opt for lamb flavored with spices and rosemary, or sole served with an onion, thyme, and lemon compote.

PERIGUEUX L'Essentiel 🚸 ≡ ☂ 🍸 €€

8 rue de la Clarté, 24000 ***Tel*** *05 53 35 15 15* ***Fax*** *05 53 35 15 15*

Another city-center restaurant where it's wise to reserve. The dining room's sunny southern colors complement dishes such as roast *foie gras* with gnocchi. There's also a pretty, pocket-sized garden. The wine list offers more than 100 wines to choose from.

PUJAUDRAN Le Puits St-Jacques P 🚸 ≡ ☂ 🍸 🍷 €€€€

Pl de la Mairie, 32600 ***Tel*** *05 62 07 41 11* ***Fax*** *05 62 07 44 09*

Michelin-starred restaurant where you can feast on panfried *foie gras* with gingerbread, or Limousin beef with shallot confit. Neither pretentious nor too pricey, if you opt for a set menu. Rustic chic ambience, with lots of red Toulousain brick work and a pleasant patio.

PUJOLS La Toque Blanche P 🚸 ▤ ♿ 🍷 €€€

Pujols, 47300 ***Tel*** *05 53 49 00 30*

A renowned gourmet restaurant in a medieval village between Agen and Villeneuve-sur-Lot. The best place to eat is in the air-conditioned conservatory, which has panoramic views. The menu changes with the seasons but is always based on local products. Dessert choices include homemade ice creams and sorbets. A hotel adjoins the restaurant.

PUYMIROL Les Loges de l'Aubergade P 🚸 ▤ ♿ ⛱ 🍸 🍷 €€€€€

52 rue Royale, 47270 ***Tel*** *05 53 95 31 46* ***Fax*** *05 53 95 33 80*

One of the southwest's great restaurants is set in a beautiful medieval lodge on a hilltop. Here Michel Trama creates sublime dishes such as *foie gras* panfried and served with toasted hazelnuts. Equally theatrical setting with Baroque drapes and exposed stone, and a gorgeous Italianate courtyard.

ROCAMADOUR Sainte Marie 🚸 ⛱ €

Pl des Senhals, 46500 ***Tel*** *05 65 33 63 07*

There is a splendid view over the Alzou valley from the terrace of this hotel-restaurant, which clings to the rock in the middle of Rocamadour. Local Quercy and southwestern dishes using fresh produce make up the menu – homemade cassoulet and *confit de canard* – with options for children available. Inexpensive "express" menu at lunchtimes.

SARLAT La Couleurvrine €

1 pl de la Bouquerie, 24200 ***Tel*** *05 53 59 27 80*

A hotel and restaurant housed in one of the towers of the town's old ramparts. Appetizers include duck *foie gras* and pâté of hare. Main courses include scallops, panfried monkfish, stuffed mushrooms, and venison. For less formal dining there is a bistro serving an inexpensive dish of the day and staging jazz recitals in the evening.

SORGES Auberge de la Truffe P 🚸 ▤ ⛱ €€€€

Le Bourg, 24420 ***Tel*** *05 53 05 02 05* ***Fax*** *05 53 05 39 27*

Sorges is the self-proclaimed truffle "capital" of France, and this auberge is the perfect place to sample Périgord's "black diamond." The top-price menu features truffles with every course. Less expensive fare is on offer, too, and the set menus start at a reasonable price. Truffle-hunting weekends are offered.

ST-MEDARD Le Gindreau P 🚸 ▤ ⛱ 🍸 🍷 €€€€

Le Bourg, 46150 ***Tel*** *05 65 36 22 27* ***Fax*** *05 65 36 24 54*

In a hamlet northwest of Cahors, Alexis Pélissou has created one of the region's finest restaurants. Using top-quality local produce, he reinvents traditional standards for modern tastes. Meals are served in the former schoolhouse or on the terrace shaded by chestnut trees. Big choice of local wines. Closed Mar 16–Apr 8.

TOULOUSE Brasserie Flo Les Beaux Arts 🚸 ▤ ⛱ €€€

1 quai de la Daurade, 31000 ***Tel*** *05 61 21 12 12* ***Fax*** *05 61 21 14 80*

An authentic and bustling brasserie serving a broad range of dishes, from salads and seafood to southwestern favorites. To start, you could opt for a flavorsome dish of scallops baked with chanterelle mushrooms, followed by a seafood *pot-au-feu*, and prune-and-armagnac ice cream. The menu changes regularly.

TOULOUSE Les Jardins de l'Opéra 🚸 ▤ 🍸 🍷 €€€€

1 pl du Capitole, 31000 ***Tel*** *05 61 23 07 76* ***Fax*** *05 61 23 63 00*

Gourmet dining at its most refined in the restaurant of the Grand Hôtel de l'Opéra. Hushed tones and widely spaced tables create a suitably reverent atmosphere for dishes such as whole lobster garnished with a seaweed crust, or figs cooked in Banyuls wine and filled with vanilla ice cream. Impeccable service.

TURSAC La Source 🚸 ⛱ €

Le Bourg, 24620 ***Tel*** *05 53 06 98 00*

If you're looking for somewhere to eat while exploring the Vézère valley, try this friendly little village restaurant. Simple, tasty dishes include wild mushroom soup and walnut pie. There's a vegetarian menu, using produce fresh from the garden, and some international options, for a change. Open for lunch only; closed Tue, Wed, and Jan–Mar.

VAREN Le Moulin de Varen P 🚸 ▤ ♿ €€

Le Bourg, 82330 ***Tel*** *05 63 65 45 10*

A converted mill in the Aveyron gorges, near the lovely town of St-Antonin-de-Noble-Val. There's no carte, but plenty of choice on the set menus, all of which offer excellent value for money. The food is beautifully presented and the atmosphere relaxed. Closed Sun dinner, Mon, Tue, and Christmas.

THE PYRENEES

AINHOA La Maison Oppoca ⛱ €€€

Le Bourg, 64250 ***Tel*** *05 59 29 90 72*

This hotel and restaurant is situated in the center of one ot the most beautiful villages in the French Basque country. *Foie gras* and suckling pig are on the menu with, of course, *gâteau basque* for dessert. Upstairs there are ten light and comfortable guest rooms with large beds.

ASCAIN Atelier Gourmand ⛱ €€

Place de Fronton, 64310 ***Tel*** *05 59 54 46 82*

Sitting at the foot of a church in the picturesque Pyrenean village of Ascain is this lively, trendy restaurant. The menu includes Basque favorites. Take your pick from finger-licking *tapas*, *pipérade*, and *axoa* (a spicy Basque stew), or fillet of sea bream.

AUDRESSEIN L'Auberge d'Audressein ⛱ €€€

Castillon, 09800 ***Tel*** *05 61 96 11 80*

This restaurant-with-rooms in a former blacksmith's forge has various set menus named after the local valleys. Dishes include typical Ariège recipes. There are seven guestrooms overlooking the river, the valley, or the village. A great place to come if you are in search of quiet countryside and the simple life.

AX-LES-THERMES L'Auzeraie 🚸 ⛱ €€

1 av Théophile Delcassé, 09110 ***Tel*** *05 61 64 20 70*

A restaurant and 33-room hotel in a pleasant spa town, which makes a handy stop on the way from the Ariège to Andorra or Spain. At lunchtime from Monday to Friday you can take pot luck with an inexpensive menu of *entrée du jour* and *plat du jour*. A children's menu is also available.

BAGNERES DE LUCHON Les Caprices d'Etigny P 🚸 ▤ ♿ ⛱ 🍷 €€

30 bis allées d'Etigny, 31110 ***Tel*** *05 61 94 31 05*

Fine mountain views from the tables in the conservatory-style dining room. The menu stresses local lamb and beef grilled over a wood fire, and trout from the nearby Lac d'Oo presented in a number of different styles. The good wine list emphasizes the finer wines of southwestern France.

BAREGES Auberge du Lienz (Chez Louisette) 🚸 ♿ €€

Rte Lienz, 65120 ***Tel*** *05 62 67 17* ***Fax*** *05 62 92 65 15*

A good choice for an *après-ski* meal, at the foot of the local pistes, with stunning views of the Pic du Midi de Bigorre. Menu mainstays include mutton stewed in Madeira wine, trout, and sumptuous soufflés. The *pièce de résistance* is the ham *garbure* – a hefty dish of ham, bacon, and cabbage.

BAYONNE Le Bayonnais 🚸 ♿ ⛱ 🍷 €€

38 quai des Corsaires, 64100 ***Tel*** *05 59 25 61 19* ***Fax*** *05 59 59 00 64*

With a handful of tables on the terrace and more inside, this small restaurant has a well-deserved reputation for imaginative dishes, such as baby lamb, sole with lentils, chestnut soup with *foie gras*, and pastilla with figs. Well-chosen wine list emphasizes regional wines and major names from elsewhere in France.

BAYONNE Auberge du Cheval Blanc P 🚸 ▤ ♿ €€€

68 rue Bourgneuf, 64100 ***Tel*** *05 59 59 01 33* ***Fax*** *05 59 59 52 26*

Stray from the set menu to eat *à la carte* at this well-regarded hotel in the riverside Petit Bayonne quarter. The menu changes with the seasons, with local dishes, such as *xamano* (ham and mashed potatoes), fine Atlantic seafood, interesting soups and casseroles, and delicious desserts. Respectable wine list. Closed Feb.

BIARRITZ Chez Albert P 🚸 ⛱ €€

Port des Pêcheurs, 64200 ***Tel*** *05 59 24 43 84* ***Fax*** *05 59 24 20 13*

From the terrace there are superb views of Biarritz's picturesque fishing harbor and surrounding cliffs and beaches, making this fine seafood restaurant popular. Arrive early for the best tables. Piled platters of seafood, freshly caught lobster, sole, sea bream, tuna, and sardines are among the treats here. Closed Jan.

BIARRITZ Le Sissinou 🚸 ▤ 🍷 €€€€

5 av Maréchal Foch, 64200 ***Tel*** *05 59 22 51 50*

Managed by chef Michel Cassou-Debat – a veteran of some of France's top establishments – Sissinou is one of Biarritz's most talked-about restaurants. Elegant in a minimalist way. Wonderful food such as tuna carpaccio and a fricassée of veal sweetbreads served with carrots flavored with balsamic vinegar and desserts that invite indulgence.

FOIX Le Sainte Marthe P 🚸 ▤ ⛱ €€

21 rue N. Peyrevidal, 09000 ***Tel*** *05 61 02 87 87*

A gourmet paradise that lives up to its reputation, Le Sainte Marthe pays fine attention to detail in providing some of the best traditional dishes of the region. This is old-fashioned French regional cuisine at its best, a decent wine list, a friendly welcome, and a great location beneath the medieval castle. Closed 2 weeks in Jan.

LARRAU Etchemaïté P 🚸 ⛱ 🍷 €€

Larrau, 64560 ***Tel*** *05 59 28 61 45* ***Fax*** *05 59 28 72 71*

This family-run mountain inn and restaurant has a spectacular location and a cozy dining room with open fireplace and great views. Favorites are lamb and duck dishes garnished with apples, *cèpes*, or *foie gras* and there is usually a good choice of Atlantic seafood, too. Varied wine list.

LOURDES Le Magret P 🚸 ♿ 🍷 €

10 rue des 4 Freres Soulas, 65100 ***Tel*** *05 62 94 20 55*

One of the better places to eat in Lourdes city center. The menu varies according to the season with Gascon black pork, Pyrenean lamb, *magret de canard* (duck breast), veal, lamb, and duck as reliable specialties. Regional wines from the nearby Jurancon and Madiran regions accompany the meal. Vegetarians are catered for.

MIREPOIX Les Remparts 🚸 €€€

6 cours Louis Pons Tande, 09500 ***Tel*** *05 61 68 12 15*

The specialty of the house is trout cooked in Hypocras, the sweet dessert wine of the region. The restaurant has two dining rooms: one in a cozily converted cellar, the other with a wide wood-beamed ceiling and colorful paintwork. Robust classic dishes of the region. Children's menu is available.

MONTSEGUR Costes 🚸 ⛱ €

Le Village, 09300 ***Tel*** *05 61 01 10 24*

This simple café-restaurant is part of a hotel beneath the crag that is home to Montségur's ruined castle. Organic ingredients are used in tasty local dishes, mostly prepared on the open wood fire – game, duck, wild mushrooms, pork, and, of course, *cassoulet*. Just the thing after the steep clamber to the castle. Phone to check winter opening.

ORTHEZ Au Temps de la Reine Jeanne P 🚸 ♿ €€€

44 rue Bourg-Vieux, 64300 ***Tel*** *05 59 67 00 76* ***Fax*** *05 59 69 09 63*

This rustic eating-place is attached to a comfortable country inn. The menu is equally rustic, with plenty of local dishes, including offal and rich meaty dishes. Liver, blood sausage, suckling pig, *foie gras*, *cassoulet*, and monkfish all make an appearance. Good value.

PAU Chez Pierre P 🚸 ☰ 🍷 €€€

16 rue Louis Barthou, 64000 ***Tel*** *05 59 27 76 86* ***Fax*** *05 59 27 08 14*

Chez Pierre exudes 19th-century elegance and prides itself on the old-fashioned, clublike atmosphere that harks back to Pau's heyday as a British expatriate's hideaway. Classic French regional cooking along with some surprises, such as cod with espelette peppers, and an extensive wine list.

ST-BERTRAND-DE-COMMINGES L'Oppidum P 🚸 ♿ ⛱ €

Rue de la Poste, 31510 ***Tel*** *05 61 88 33 50*

Located in the old town just below St-Bertrand's celebrated cathedral, is this small, friendly hotel and restaurant serving good, unpretentious food. Featuring on the menu are the local stew, *garbure*, *foie gras*, and trout. All accompanied by local wines. There are 15 simple guest bedrooms upstairs.

ST GAUDENS La Connivence P 🚸 ⛱ €€

Chemin Ample, Valentine, 31800 ***Tel*** *05 61 95 29 31*

The outdoor terrace with its fine views is one of the main attractions of La Connivence. The bill of fare is traditional, as is the atmosphere, but helpings are generous and the wine list, though limited, is well chosen. Service is prompt and friendly. An unpretentious spot for lunch or dinner. Closed for lunch on Saturday and Sunday dinner.

ST-JEAN-DE-LUZ Restaurant Petit Grill Basque 🚸 €

2 rue St-Jacques, 64500 ***Tel*** *05 59 26 80 76* ***Fax*** *05 59 26 80 76*

One of the most affordable eating places in normally pricy St-Jean-de-Luz, with the accent on simple, good Basque home cooking using fresh local ingredients. The fish soup is excellent, as are the grilled squid and the peppers stuffed with cod, and many other Basque dishes. Well-priced and unassuming wine list.

ST-JEAN-DE-LUZ Restaurant Txalupa P 🚸 ⛱ €€€

Pl Corsaires, 64500 ***Tel*** *05 59 51 23 34*

Txalupa is a favorite local restaurant. Expect the best catches of the Atlantic coast prepared in dishes such as king prawns in a hot vinegar dressing, sardines in tomato salsa, oysters and lots of other shellfish, tuna, cod, and monkfish. Extensive wine list, and imaginative desserts. Reserve in advance.

ST-JEAN-DE-PIED-DE-PORT Relais de la Nive €

2 pl Charles de Gaulle, 64220 ***Tel*** *05 59 37 04 22*

The most conspicuous place to eat in St-Jean-de-Pied-de-Port, and as a result always busy with passing pilgrim traffic, is this brasserie-creperie, which picturesquely overhangs the river between the new bridge and the old. It serves inexpensive meals as well as snacks such as pancakes, sandwiches, and ice cream.

ST-LARY SOULAN La Grange P 🚸 ⛱ €€

13 rte Autun, 65170 ***Tel*** *05 62 40 07 14*

This old-fashioned farm building at St-Lary-Soulan in the high Pyrenees is a delightful place to stop for lunch. A well-appointed and attractively decorated restaurant, it exudes rustic charm. The traditional bill of fare includes robust meaty main dishes, with game, beef, and lamb grilled over a wood fire.

ST-LIZIER De la Tour 🚸 ⛱ €€

Rue du Pont, 09190 ***Tel*** *05 61 66 38 01*

This place overhanging the River Salat is the most conveninent place to eat while visiting the historic village of St-Lizier. On the menu is trout from the Couserans region, lamb, duck, and homemade pâtés and terrines. A good, inexpensive lunchtime menu is served on weekdays and there is also a children's menu.

ST-SULPICE-SUR-LEZE La Commanderie 🚸 ⛱ 🍷 €€€

Pl de l'Hôtel de Ville, 31410 ***Tel*** *05 61 97 33 61* ***Fax*** *05 61 97 32 60*

In a fortified *bastide* village famous for its medieval architecture, La Commanderie has fans all over the world for its innovative cooking. Chef Jean Pierre Crouzet creates dishes such as vegetable ragoût with morille mushrooms and ewe's cheese and roast pigeon with garlic and juniper. Lovely, spacious dining room. Closed 2 weeks in Feb.

SARE Baratxartea €

J.B. Fagoaga, 64310 ***Tel*** *05 59 54 20 48*

An ancient Basque house is the setting for this hotel and restaurant in the exceptionally pretty town of Sare. The menu is rich in home produce: vegetables are from the garden, charcuterie is prepared over the winter months, hams are cured in the barn, and jams are homemade.

TARBES L'Ambroisie €€€

48 rue Abbé Torné, 65000 ***Tel*** *05 62 93 09 34* ***Fax*** *05 62 93 09 24*

The top restaurant in Tarbes attracts plaudits for dishes ranging from roast pigeon to *foie gras* in peach compote. Housed in a 19th-century church building, the restaurant offers a changing menu, brisk service, and food worth lingering over. Wine list features the finer Madiran domains. Reserve ahead.

LANGUEDOC-ROUSSILLON

AIGUES-MORTES Le Café des Bouzigues €€

7 rue Pasteur, 30220 ***Tel*** *04 66 53 93 95*

It is usually easy to find a table in this large traditional bistro. The menu is strongly Mediterranean, with plenty of regional seafood, Provençal dishes, and reasonably priced wines from Provence and Languedoc. Lamb with thyme and garlic and peach salad are among the outstanding dishes.

AIGUES-MORTES Marie Rosé €€

13 rue Pasteur, 30220 ***Tel*** *04 66 53 79 84*

A delightful restaurant located in an ancient presbytery with a kitchen garden. The chef prepares Provençale dishes with a delicate touch. Talent and accomplishment shine through in dishes such as the violet flan, sea bream and *calamars à la plancha*, and baby lamb with artichokes. There is also a small selection of well-chosen wines.

ANDUZE Auberge des Trois Barbus €€

Rte de Mialet, Generagargues, 20140 ***Tel*** *04 66 61 72 12*

Deep in the Cevennes above the Camisards valley, with spectacular views, this rustic hotel-restaurant has the added attraction of a pool that diners may use for an after-lunch dip. Traditional Cevennes and Languedoc dishes as well as more adventurous offerings. Delicious *foie gras* and truffles. Closed Feb–mid-Mar.

ARLES SUR TECH Les Glycines €

Rue du Jeu de Paume, 66150 ***Tel*** *04 68 39 10 09* ***Fax*** *04 68 39 83 02*

Arles sur Tech is a place that beckons you to pause for a while, and this hotel-restaurant is an excellent place for a lunch stop. It is very good value for money, with a lovely wisteria-covered patio and a menu that emphasizes regional cuisine and local produce, with plenty of ham, pork, and sausage dishes.

BEZIERS Octopus €€€€

12 rue Boiledieu, 34500 ***Tel*** *04 67 49 90 00* ***Fax*** *04 67 28 06 73*

Béziers has no shortage of quality places to eat, but Octopus stands out from the crowd. With fresh, chic decor, this restaurant feels very welcoming. The modern menu is balanced by a well-chosen list of wines from the Languedoc-Roussillon vineyards.

BIZE MINERVOIS La Bastide Cabezac €€€

18-20 hameau Cabezac, 11120 ***Tel*** *04 68 46 66 10*

Attractive 18th-century staging post with an elegant restaurant. The chef is motivated and dynamic, producing outstanding dishes such as delicate crayfish tart, and monkfish roasted in a pinenut crust flavored with curry and served with Camargue rice and a light lemongrass sauce.

CAP D'AGDE Le Brasero €

Port Richelieu, rue Richelieu, 34300 ***Tel*** *04 67 26 24 75* ***Fax*** *04 67 26 24 75*

Overlooking the port with its yachts and fishing boats, Le Brasero has a well-earned reputation for good-value seafood. Its seafood platters are generous and varied, and other marine delights include grilled fish of all kinds, fresh anchovies, squid, tuna, and swordfish. Grilled meat dishes also available. Reserve ahead.

CARCASSONE Les Bergers d'Arcadie €

70 rue Trivalle, 11000 ***Tel*** *04 68 72 46 01*

A friendly unpretentious little restaurant close to the ramparts of the magnificent citadel. Cuisine is based on Languedoc produce and combines old and new influences to create an interesting menu. Specialties include poached *foie gras*, and *cochon de lait* glazed with caramelized honey and served with seasonal mushrooms. Delicious desserts.

CARCASSONNE Le Languedoc €€

32 allée d'Iéna, 11000 ***Tel*** *04 68 25 22 17* ***Fax*** *04 68 25 04 14*

This restaurant appeals to people who like their surroundings and cuisine to be traditionally French, even a little staid. The menu features all the regional classics, and Le Languedoc is one of the best places for *cassoulet* – the hearty bean and sausage casserole that is the Languedoc's most typical dish.

CARCASSONE Le Parc Franck Putelat P ☰ ♿ ⛱ 🍸 🍷 €€€

80 chemin des Anglais, 11000 ***Tel*** *04 68 71 80 80*

The chef, with the help if his young kitchen team, has stamped his personality on this gastronomic restaurant in a comparatively short time. Contemporary food is served in a relaxed, yet refined atmosphere. Expect spectacular fish dishes such as spider crab, sea urchin, and caviar prepared with simplicity. Gourmet desserts. Good-value set menus.

CASTELNAUDARY Au Petit Gazouillis 🚸 €

5 rue de l'Arcade, 11400 ***Tel*** *04 68 23 08 18*

This is an absolutely typical, no-nonsense local bistro with a limited menu of traditional regional dishes, including what may be the best *cassoulet* in the world. Beloved by Castelnaudary locals, it also serves great duck, and has a very reasonable assortment of regional wines. Unpretentious almost to a fault.

COLLIOURE La Balette P 🚸 ☰ ⛱ €€€

114 rte de Port-Vendres, 66190 ***Tel*** *04 68 82 05 07* ***Fax*** *04 68 82 38 08*

Specialties at this cheerful restaurant, part of the Relais des Trois Mas, include soused Collioure anchovies marinaded in Banjul wine vinegar, terrine of *foie gras* and chestnuts, sea bass served with chicory crumble, and pigeon cooked in honey. Set above the picturesque bay of Colliours. Reserve ahead in summer.

COLLIOURE Le 5e Péché €€€

18 rue Fraternité, 66190 ***Tel*** *04 68 98 09 76*

The best produce Catalogne has to offer combined with the skill of the Japanese chef make this restaurant a great success. An original range of Japanese-inspired dishes include carpaccio of freshly caught fish, stir-fried tuna with a Banyuls-flavored sauce, and a *crème Catalane* of caramelized artichokes.

CUCUGNAN Auberge du Vigneron 🚸 ☰ ⛱ 🍷 €€

2 rue Achille Mir, 11350 ***Tel*** *04 68 45 03 00* ***Fax*** *04 68 45 03 08*

The dining room is in the cool wine cellar of a charming inn in the heart of an attractive Corbières village. The menu is Catalan-influenced, with fresh seafood and duck prepared in a variety of ways, even with figs or peaches. The wine list is unpretentious, with a good choice of the muscular reds of the Corbières domains.

FONTJONCOUSE L'Auberge du Vieux Puits P ☰ ♿ 🍸 🍷 €€€€€

Av St Victor, 11360 ***Tel*** *04 68 44 07 37*

The small village of Fontjoncouse in the Corbière countryside has been made famous by this superb restaurant. Chef Gilles Goujon is both energetic and ambitious. The menu ranges from a simple, salade niçoise to more complex dishes such as lobster-stuffed canneloni. Game when in season features also. Excellent wines.

GIGNAC Restaurant Matthieu de Lauzun 🚸 ☰ ♿ 🍷 €€€

3 bd de l'Esplanade, 34150 ***Tel*** *04 67 57 50 83*

This restaurant, west of Montpellier, had become staid, but since the arrival of a young dynamic chef, it has recovered its panache. Dishes are carefully prepared and harmonious. Vegetables with prawn tempura and cucumber gazpacho is a sweet success. Desserts are inventive. Good wines from up-and-coming producers.

LE BOULOU L'Hostalet de Vivès 🚸 ⛱ €

Rue de la Mairie, 66490 ***Tel*** *04 68 83 05 52*

Not far from the artist town of Céret lies this lovely auberge serving authentic Catalan cuisine. A favorite with the locals, it has a good choice of well-prepared dishes at reasonable prices – a real bonus in this region popular with tourists. Discover Catalan dishes such as *cargolade* (grilled snails), and rabbit served with *aioli*.

MARAUSSON Parfums de Garrigues P 🚸 ☰ ♿ ⛱ €€€

37 rue de l'Ancienne Poste, 34370 ***Tel*** *04 67 90 33 76*

Comfortable dining room with sunny tones and a pretty shady courtyard in the center of a sleepy village, near Beziers. The fine southwest cuisine includes the best regional produce and reflects the scents of the Garrigue. The menu includes a refreshing goat's milk *crème* with Bouzigues oysters, and veal served with grilled vegetables.

MONTPELLIER Petit Jardin 🚸 ⛱ €

20 rue Jean-Jacques Rousseau, 34000 ***Tel*** *04 67 60 78 78* ***Fax*** *04 67 66 16 79*

The menu is locally inspired in this pretty restaurant in Montpellier's historic quarter. The "Little Garden" is tucked away from the street, and diners may eat indoors, looking out at its greenery, or in the garden among the flowers, fruit trees, and potted herbs. Dishes include fish soup and lamb with garlic and rosemary.

MONTPELLIER Chez Boris ♿ ⛱ €€

20 rue de l'Aiguillerie, 34000 ***Tel*** *04 67 02 13 22*

The most talked about bistro in town, and rightly so. Located near the Musée Fabre in the center of the city, the atmosphere here is friendly and relaxed. Classic dishes have been reinvented: think *cochon au lait* (pork in milk) cooked with spices. The portions are generous, and wine can be ordered by the glass.

MONTPELLIER Prouhèze Saveurs P 🚸 ⛱ €€

728 av de la Pompignane, 34000 ***Tel*** *04 67 79 43 34*

Colorful, family-run bistro-style restaurant on the east side of town. The son reigns in the kitchen and dexterously prepares succulent creations. Squid *à la plancha*, lamb sweetbreads accompanied by mushrooms, and a *parmentier* of Aubrac beef are just some of the delicious dishes to choose from. Good wines at affordable prices.

Key to Price Guide *see p600* **Key to Symbols** *see back cover flap*

MONTPELLIER Jardin des Sens P 🚸 ☰ ♿ ⛱ 🍷 €€€€€

11 av St Lazare, 34000 ***Tel*** *04 99 58 38 38* ***Fax*** *04 99 58 38 39*

Probably the best restaurant in town. Continuously innovative, with regional specialties given a new twist, such as terrine of lobster with mango and melon, and some delicious juxtapositions such as pigeon with a cacao sauce. The wine list features finer wines of the Corbières slopes and the domaines of the Languedoc.

NARBONNE Restaurant Le H P 🚸 ☰ ♿ ⛱ €€

Rte de Narbonne Plage, 11100 ***Tel*** *04 68 45 28 50*

Heading out of the town center toward the beach you will come across this lovely restaurant. Surrounded by rows and rows of La Clape vines sits Gérard Bertrand's wine domaine. The room is rustic yet chic with stone walls and thick wooden beams, it provides the perfect setting for a carpaccio of duck or a chunk of beef.

NARBONNE Le Table de St-Crescent P ⛱ 🍷 €€€

Domaine St-Crescent, 68 ave Général Leclerc, 11100 ***Tel*** *04 68 41 37 37* ***Fax*** *04 68 41 01 22*

An address to impress, with a superb, seasonally influenced menu that combines the best produce of the Mediterranean with that of the Languedoc hinterland, with wines to match. Ravioli of Leucate oysters roast duck with Collioure anchovies and more. Perfect for a special evening.

NIMES Le Cheval Blanc ☰ ♿ ⛱ 🍷 €

1 pl des Arènes, 30000 ***Tel*** *04 66 76 19 59*

A lively wine bar with a classic brasserie-style interior, comfy banquet seating, and some Art-Deco features in the historic center of Nîmes. The wine list is extensive, featuring established names as well as lesser known southern Rhône and Languedoc wines. Typical fare – *brandade* (smoked fish with cream), pig's trotters, and *côte de boeuf* – is well-prepared.

NIMES Aux Plaisirs des Halles 🚸 ☰ ⛱ 🍷 €€€€

4 rue Littré, 30000 ***Tel*** *04 66 36 01 02* ***Fax*** *04 66 36 08 00*

With a particularly good regional wine list from the Languedoc, Corbières, Minervois, Provence, and Hérault, Aux Plaisirs des Halles is decorated with clean, modern lines. French cuisine with a provençal influence by chef Sébastien Granier. Closed Sun, Mon; two weeks Oct–Nov; two weeks Feb.

NIMES Le Lisita 🚸 ☰ ⛱ 🍷 €€€€

2 bd des Arènes, 30000 ***Tel*** *04 66 67 29 15* ***Fax*** *04 66 67 25 32*

Lisita is not to be missed. This is one of the most popular restaurants in Nîmes, serving cutting-edge food and an outstanding wine list. The surroundings are attractive, too, with modern design set off by old stone walls in two rooms, plus an attractive terrace. Closed Sun, Mon.

PERPIGNAN Ail I Oli 🚸 ☰ ♿ €

Allée des Chênes, Parc Ducup, 66000 ***Tel*** *04 68 55 58 75*

Catalan-style brasserie situated on the edge of town, near the park. An open fireplace, hanging hams, and the smell of meats being grilled creates a warm, cozy ambience inside the vast dining room. An immense selection of Catalan favorites includes grilled lamb served with a well-seasoned *aioli* and a mouth-watering *crème* Catalan.

PERPIGNAN Le Chap' P 🚸 ☰ 🍷 €€€

18 bd Jean Bourrat, 66000 ***Tel*** *04 68 35 14 14*

Gourmet restaurant in one of Perpignan's fancy hotels. The decor in the dining room is contemporary and the menu is equally chic and modern. Technically superb dishes include risotto *à la chlorophyll,* and fish crumble flavored with ginger and lemongrass. Some old favorites still feature for those feeling less adventurous.

PERPIGNAN La Galinette 🚸 ☰ ♿ 👔 🍷 €€€€

23 rue Jean Payra, 66000 ***Tel*** *04 68 35 00 90*

The spacious, refined, modern dining room has a formal air. By contrast, in the kitchen is a chef passionate about food and prepared to take risks. Seafood is a specialty: prawns with coriander, red mullet tart and fillet of fish *à la plancha*. An expert sommelier is on hand to help you select from an impressive selection of regional wines.

PEZENAS L'Entre Pots ⛱ 🍷 €€

8 av Louis-Montagne, 34120 ***Tel*** *04 67 30 00 00*

Frequented by locals, this trendy restaurant housed in a former wine warehouse has a convivial, intimate atmosphere. Unpretentious gourmet cuisine is based on the regional produce and flavors of the Garrigue. The wine list is deliberately short with an emphasis on the best Languedocs. Reserve ahead.

PORT CAMARGUE Le Carré des Gourmets P ☰ ♿ ⛱ 🍷 €€€€

Pointe de la presqu'ile, 30240 ***Tel*** *04 66 53 36 37*

This gourmet restaurant forms part of the Le Spinaker hotel complex. A contemporary dining room boasts a lovely terrace facing out over the marina. The chef successfully combines Camargue and Catalan influences with dishes like *pata negra* cured ham, and pigeon stuffed with pine nuts. Great Languedoc wines.

PORT-VENDRES La Cote Vermeille ☰ €€€€

Quai Fanal, 66660 ***Tel*** *04 68 82 05 71* ***Fax*** *04 68 82 05 71*

This super seafood restaurant has a great quayside location with views of the fishing harbor and coastline. Fishing nets, lobster pots, and stuffed fish adorn the walls, and fresh fish, shellfish, squid, and lobster adorn the menus. Closed Jan.

PRADES Le Jardin d'Aymeric ▤ ♿ €€

3 av Général de Gaulle, 66500 ***Tel*** *04 68 96 53 38*

Refined Catalan cuisine prepared using fresh regional produce and perfumed with local mountain herbs. The menu revisits traditional dishes such as saddle of lamb with thyme accompanied by a light parsley-flavored sauce, and seasonal fruit gratin. Good selection of regional Roussillon wines at reasonable prices.

SAILLAGOUSE L'Atalaya 🚸 ⛱ €€€

Rte Départementale 33, Llo, 66800 ***Tel*** *04 68 04 70 04* ***Fax*** *04 68 04 01 29*

The cuisine at this pretty inn perched above an attractive village 5 minutes from the Spanish border is classic French, with regional produce. L'Atalaya is located at the tiny hamlet of Llo and has fine views of the surrounding countryside. Closed Jan, Mar–Easter.

SETE La Palangrotte 🚸 ▤ €€€

Quai de la Marine, 34200 ***Tel*** *04 67 74 80 35* ***Fax*** *04 67 74 97 20*

In Sète there is nowhere more pleasant to sample the famous oysters and other shellfish of the Etang de Thau lagoon than this cheerful marine-themed restaurant. Some of the best seafood on the coast, better for lunch than dinner. Closed Mon, Sun dinner (except Jul, Aug).

SOURNIA Auberge de Sournia 🚸 ⛱ €

4 rte de Prades, 66730 ***Tel*** *04 68 97 72 82*

In the heart of the Pyrénées-Orientales is this quaint auberge run by an enthusiastic young couple. The food has regional flourishes, enlivened with a modern touch. Duck in all its guises is the specialty; try the savory duck breast stuffed with goat's cheese. Other dishes include scallops, red mullet, and king prawns.

ST MARTIN DE LONDRES Les Muscardins P 🚸 ▤ 🍷 €€€€

19 rte Cevennes, 34380 ***Tel*** *04 67 55 75 90* ***Fax*** *04 67 55 70 28*

Surprising to find such a sophisticated dining experience in a little country town, but Les Muscardins is worth a special expedition for monkfish accompanied by risotto perfumed with yucca flowers, and carpaccio of smoked Aubrac veal. The surroundings are elegant. Good selection of regional wines.

UZES Les Trois Salons 🚸 🍷 €€€

18 rue de Dr Blanchard, 30700 ***Tel*** *04 66 22 57 34*

Housed in a 17th-century *hôtel particulier* in a quiet street in old town Uzès, this gourmet restaurant is made up of three elegant rooms. Simple frank cuisine, not overly elaborate, results in tasty choices such as cod served with a basil purée, roast monkfish in a chorizo crust, and a carpaccio of pineapple with raspberry macaroons.

VILLEFRANCHE DE CONFLENT Auberge St-Paul 🚸 ♿ ⛱ 🍷 €€€€€

7 pl Eglise, 66500 ***Tel*** *04 68 96 30 95* ***Fax*** *04 68 96 05 60 30*

Originally a 13th-century chapel, this village restaurant has an attractive terrace and a charming, rustic dining room. The menu is cosmopolitan, with fresh local produce and a sophisticated wine list, with fine Burgundy and Roussillon vintages. Closed Sun dinner, Mon, Tue.

VIVES Hostalet de Vivès ▤ ⛱ €€

Rue de la Mairie, 66940 ***Tel*** *04 68 83 05 52* ***Fax*** *04 68 83 51 91*

Located in a tiny Catalan village 4 miles (7 km) from Céret is this restaurant in a 12th-century building. The cuisine is simple, using the freshest local produce to prepare copious servings of dishes such as civet of bull and just-picked mushrooms from the mountains, all served up by costumed staff. Local wines, too. Closed mid-Jan–Mar.

PROVENCE AND THE COTE D'AZUR

AIX-EN-PROVENCE Brasserie Léopold 🚸 ▤ ♿ ⛱ 🍷 €€

2 av Victor Hugo, 13090 ***Tel*** *04 42 26 01 24* ***Fax*** *04 42 38 53 17*

Classic French brasserie with dozens of tables and bustling waiters, on the ground floor of the comfortable Hôtel Saint-Christophe in the center of Aix. A great place for a full-scale meal, a snack, or just a drink at any time of day or year. Strong on regional cuisine and traditional brasserie fare.

AIX-EN-PROVENCE Mas d'Entremont P 🚸 ♿ ⛱ 🍷 €€€€

Quartier des Platrières, 13090 ***Tel*** *04 42 17 42 42* ***Fax*** *04 42 21 15 83*

The food is imaginative, the list of Provençal wines is good, and the setting in a lush park above Aix at Célony is delightful. Plenty of regional meat and fish. In summer, dine on a lovely terrace overlooking the gardens, with fine views. The dining room has huge picture windows overlooking the park. Closed Sun dinner, Mon lunch, Nov–Apr.

AIX-EN-PROVENCE Yamato P ▤ ♿ ⛱ 🍸 🍷 €€€€

21 av des Belges ***Tel*** *04 42 38 00 20*

Run by Koji and Yuriko Somaya, this is arguably the most authentic Japanese restaurant in Aix-en-Provence. Whether you dine in the Zen garden or in the airy dining room, you'll be transported far from France to the Orient. The sushi is superb, as are the less predictable dishes such as *chawanmushi* (grilled eel). Closed Mon–Tue lunch.

AIX-EN-PROVENCE Le Clos de la Violette €€€€€

10 av Violette, 13100 ***Tel*** *04 42 23 30 71* ***Fax*** *04 42 21 93 03*

This is an elegant address in a chic mansion standing in its own gardens: tranquil, intimate, and perfect for a romantic evening. People do dress up a little to eat here. The wine list is extensive (and very strong on local and Provençal wines) and the menu is Provençal with a modern edge. Closed Sun, Mon, Aug.

ARLES La Gueule du Loup €€

39 rue des Arènes, 13200 ***Tel*** *04 90 96 96 69* ***Fax*** *04 90 96 96 69*

La Gueule du Loup ("the Wolf's Maw") is more welcoming than its ferocious name implies, with a menu that changes virtually daily and serves up exquisite Provençal cuisine in charmingly rustic surroundings. Prompt service and a good choice of wines. Not cutting-edge cuisine, but good at what it does. Closed Sun, Mon lunch.

ARLES Lou Marques €€€

Bd Lices, 13631 ***Tel*** *04 90 52 52 52* ***Fax*** *04 90 52 52 53*

Lou Marques – the restaurant of the venerable Hôtel Jules César – is one of the best places to eat in Arles, with a central location, pleasant terrace with tables under white umbrellas, and a bill of fare that concentrates on classic Provençal dishes. Dignified surroundings. Closed Mon, Sat lunch, Sun dinner.

ARLES L'Atelier de Jean-Luc Rabanel €€€€

7 rue des Carmes, 13200 ***Tel*** *04 90 91 07 69*

Arrive with a large appetite at this small restaurant in the center of Arles; there is a minimum of seven courses at lunch and 13 at dinner. Jean-Luc Rabanel works almost exclusively with organic produce from his own vegetable garden and each dish is a miniature work of art. Reserve ahead or drop into the casual bistro next door. Closed Mon–Tue.

AVIGNON La Fourchette €€€

17 rue Racine, 84000 ***Tel*** *04 90 85 20 93* ***Fax*** *04 90 85 57 60*

Much loved locally, La Fourchette is a quirky little place with walls adorned by antique forks and festival posters. The menu is traditional Provençal, with a modern take on dishes such as duck breast in garlic and vegetable crêpes. Excellent choice of cheeses. Closed Sat, Sun, Aug. Reservations required.

AVIGNON Le Petit Bedon €€€

70 rue Joseph-Vernet, 84000 ***Tel*** *04 90 82 33 98* ***Fax*** *04 90 85 58 64*

Le Petit Bedon, just inside the walls of Avignon's old quarter, has a good reputation for tasty dishes such as poached vegetables with tapenade and *pistou*, *bourride de loup* (monkfish stew), and courgette (zucchini) puree with garlic. Amiable atmosphere. Provençal wines. Closed Sun lunch (all year), Mon lunch Nov–Apr.

AVIGNON Christian Etienne €€€€€

10 rue Mons, 84000 ***Tel*** *04 90 86 16 50* ***Fax*** *04 90 86 67 09*

The wine list is strong on Provençal and Rhône Valley vintages, the location in the medieval heart of Avignon near the Papal Palace is hard to beat, and the food is equally unbeatable in this highly regarded restaurant, with menus that emphasize imaginatively treated local produce. Closed Sun, Mon (except in Jul).

AVIGNON La Mirande €€€€€

4 pl de la Mirande, 84000 ***Tel*** *04 90 14 20 20* ***Fax*** *04 90 86 26 85*

One of the most delicious places to eat in Avignon, with tables outside beneath olive trees and the floodlit walls of the Palais des Papes or indoors in a grand dining room in what was once a cardinal's palace. Extensive, dazzling menu and wine list. Friendly service. Reserve in advance. Closed Tue, Wed.

BIOT Les Terraillers €€€€€

11 rte Chemin Neuf, 06410 ***Tel*** *04 93 65 01 59*

Sophisticated restaurant serving dishes that are rich in every sense of the word, flavored with truffles and the herbs of surrounding hills. The *foie gras escalope* is not to be missed, and the lamb is a culinary triumph. The wine list highlights some of the better *vins de pays* of Provence. Closed Wed, Thu, Nov.

BONNIEUX La Bastide de Capelongue Restaurant Edward Loubet €€€€€

84160 ***Tel*** *04 90 75 89 78* ***Fax*** *04 90 75 93 03*

Two Michelin stars keep this fine restaurant ahead of the local competition. Reservations essential – especially during the Cannes Film Festival, when it is packed with stars. The menu celebrates the produce and flavors of the Luberon hills and the Mediterranean coast, such as truffles *en-croûte* and roasted venison.

CAGNES Fleur de Sel €€€

85 Montée de la Bourgade, 06800 ***Tel*** *04 93 20 33 33*

Delightful small restaurant serving unpretentious cooking at affordable prices – especially the set menus. Attractively rustic surroundings – the restaurant is in the heart of the village of Haut de Cagnes, next to the medieval church. Adequate choice of inexpensive wines. Closed Wed, Thu lunch.

CAGNES Le Cagnard €€€€

45 rue Sous Barri, Haut de Cagnes, 06800 ***Tel*** *04 93 20 73 21* ***Fax*** *04 93 22 06 39*

The outstanding Cagnard has an epicurean menu with truffles, pigeon, langoustine, and more, elegantly served in the surroundings of a 14th-century mansion, accompanied by some of the best wines of Provence and the Gard region. Closed Mon lunch, Tue lunch, Thu lunch.

CANNES Le Pastis €€

28 rue du Commandandement André, 06400 ***Tel*** *04 92 98 95 40*

With an interior that feels like a cross between an American diner and a French bistro, Le Pastis is perfect for a casual meal at any time of day. The menu is mostly Mediterranean with dishes such as *daube à la niçoise* (beef stew), but you will also find Caesar salad and steak tartare. Near the main shopping street and beach. Closed Mon lunch.

CANNES Ondine €€€

15 bd de la Croisette, 06400 ***Tel*** *04 93 94 23 15*

Beach restaurants usually have modest gastronomic aspirations, but Ondine is an exception. Chef Jean-Pierre Silva visits the market every day to hand-select the freshest ingredients. The focus is on fish with dishes such as crab salad and turbot with spring vegetables. Excellent wine list. Closed Wed; mid-Nov–mid-Dec.

CANNES La Cave €€€€

9 bd de la République, 06400 ***Tel*** *04 93 99 79 87* ***Fax*** *04 93 68 91 19*

La Cave has been running for around two decades and is popular with both locals and tourists. Its large choice of traditional, Provençal dishes is made from fresh, locally sourced ingredients. The wine list has over 350 references, including an excellent selection from local producers. Closed Sat lunch, Sun.

CANNES Le 38 €€€€

38 rue des Serbes, 06400 ***Tel*** *04 92 99 79 60* ***Fax*** *04 93 99 26 10*

It is difficult to eat more lavishly than in the posh surroundings of the Royal Gray, where diners can expect some of the finest cooking in Cannes – but at a surprisingly affordable price, and with courteous service. The accent is on Provençal flavors and Mediterranean seafood. Extensive wine list. Closed Sun, Mon.

CANNES La Palme d'Or €€€€€

73 la Croisette, 06400 ***Tel*** *04 92 98 74 14* ***Fax*** *04 93 39 03 38*

Children are not actually barred from this restaurant of the stars, nor is it essential to wear a tie – but diners who are not dressed to impress may feel self-conscious here. The food is imaginative and superb, with an impressive, costly wine list. Reservations required. Closed Sun, Mon, Jan–Mar.

CARPENTRAS Chez Serge €€€

90 rue Cottier, 84200 ***Tel*** *04 90 63 21 24* ***Fax*** *04 90 60 30 71*

Chez Serge is a surprising discovery in sleepy Carpentras – a mix of old and new that is reflected in its style and menu. There's inventive, refined international cooking and evening wine tastings. Fresh fish is cooked in imaginative ways and wild mushrooms feature often on the menu. Closed Sun, Mon Jan–Feb.

CASTELLANE Auberge du Teillon €€€€

Rte Napoléon - la Garde, 04120 ***Tel*** *04 92 83 60 88* ***Fax*** *04 92 83 74 08*

Pleasant country inn 4 miles (6 km) from the busy tourist hot-spot of Castellane. The bill of fare is unprententious and changes according to the seasons, emphasizing traditional Provençal dishes, simply prepared including home-smoked salmon. Rooms available. Closed Nov–Mar; Sun dinner, Mon (except Jul & Aug).

CAVAILLON Restaurant Prévôt €€€€

353 av de Verdun, 84300 ***Tel*** *04 90 71 32 43*

A gastronomic treat in the heart of the pretty market town of Cavaillon, where chef Jean-Jacques Prévôt is mad about melons – his restaurant has them as a decorative motif and there is even a set menu dedicated to the gourd family. Melon and scallops are recommended. Good portfolio of wines. Closed Sun, Mon.

CHATEAU-ARNOUX La Bonne Etape €€€€€

Chemin du Lac, 04160 ***Tel*** *04 92 64 00 09* ***Fax*** *04 92 64 37 36*

This charming inn, located in a nondescript market town, has an outstanding array of dishes and emphasizes fresh local produce, especially lamb. The wine list is lengthy, featuring vintages from almost every French region. The dining room is decorated with paintings and tapestries. Closed Mon, Tue Sep–Jun, Jan.

CHATEAUNEUF DU PAPE La Mère Germaine €€

3 rue Commandant Lemaitre, 84230 ***Tel*** *04 90 83 54 37* ***Fax*** *04 90 83 50 27*

Surrounded by vineyards, this restaurant has an outstanding list of local and regional wines. The cooking is classic Provençal, servings are generous, and La Mère Germaine offers good value and friendly service. Go for lunch to enjoy the view.

COLLOBRIERES La Petite Fontaine €€

1 pl de la Republique, 83610 ***Tel*** *04 94 48 00 12* ***Fax*** *04 94 48 03 03*

This simple restaurant is in the center of Collobrières, a sleepy hill village in the heart of the Massif des Moaures. Specialties include chicken and garlic *fricassée*, rabbit with fresh herbs, and duck with wild mushrooms, complemented by wines from the local wine co-operative. Closed Sun dinner, Mon, last two weeks Sep.

DIGNE-LES-BAINS Villa Gaïa €€

24 rte de Nice, 04000 ***Tel*** *04 92 31 21 60*

A few kilometers from the center of Digne, this hotel-restaurant serves simple but delicious family cooking. Some of the dishes are made with vegetables from the garden; look for other local products such as Sisteron lamb, game, and Banon cheese, which is wrapped in a chestnut leaf. Closed lunch; Wed (except Jul–Aug).

DIGNE-LES-BAINS Le Grand Paris P ♿ ⛱ 🍷 €€€€

19 bd Thiers, 04000 ***Tel*** *04 92 31 11 15* ***Fax*** *04 92 32 32 82*

This rather grand hotel-restaurant has an air of bourgeois respectability that may be a little off-putting to some – for a more relaxed atmosphere, sit outside on the terrace. Classic food, such as *brandade* (mashed potatoes) with peppers, lamb *mignonette*, and pigeon. Good choice of Rhône and Provençal wines. Closed lunch Mon–Wed, Dec–Mar.

EZE Troubadour 🍷 €€€

4 rue du Brec, 06360 ***Tel*** *04 93 41 19 03*

Pleasant, traditional restaurant in the center of Eze's labyrinth of stone buildings that can only be reached on foot. The Troubadour has three small dining rooms, tucked inside medieval walls and offering a respite from the summer sun. Set menus and *à la carte* options feature classic Provençal cooking. Closed Sun, Mon, mid-Nov–mid-Dec.

FAYENCE Le Castellaras 🚸 ⛱ 🍷 €€€€

Rte de Seillans, 83440 ***Tel*** *04 94 76 13 80* ***Fax*** *04 94 84 17 50*

Le Castellaras serves dishes that balance tradition with innovation: lamb fillet with tarragon sauce; scampi marinated in olive oil, lemon, and tarragon; polenta in truffle oil. The wine list draws mainly from the Côtes de Provence vineyards. Closed Mon, Tue (except Jul–Aug). Reserve ahead. Closed Jan.

FAYENCE Le Moulin de la Camandoule P 🚸 ▤ ⛱ €€€€

Chemin de Notre Dame des Cyprès, 83440 ***Tel*** *04 94 76 00 84* ***Fax*** *04 94 76 10 40*

In an ancient olive mill, this hotel-restaurant benefits from a peaceful and idyllic setting. Chef Phillipe Choissy offers several menus and à la carte dishes of high quality; the flavors are Provençal and the ingredients all fresh and seasonal. Lunch is often served on the terrace. Closed Wed, Thu.

GIGONDAS Les Florets P 🚸 ⛱ 🍷 €€€€

Rte des Dentelles, 84190 ***Tel*** *04 90 65 85 01* ***Fax*** *04 90 65 83 80*

The terrace of this hotel-restaurant has fine views of the Dentelles de Montmirail. Well-presented regional cooking is complemented by the fine wines of the Gigondas region. The restaurant is popular, so arrive early or make a reservation. Closed Wed, Jan–mid-Mar.

GRASSE Bastide St Antoine P 🚸 ▤ ⛱ 🍷 ♿ €€€€€

48 av H. Dunant, 06130 ***Tel*** *04 93 70 94 94* ***Fax*** *04 93 70 94 95*

Jacques Chibois's superb restaurant is attached to his delightful boutique-hotel in Grasse's quartier St-Antoine, with a menu that will excite gourmets and lovers of inventive French cuisine – duckling, truffles, and an inventive approach to vegetables. There is also an excellent, mainly Provençal, wine list.

JUAN LES PINS Les Pêcheurs 🚸 ▤ 🍷 €€€€€

10 bd Maréchal Juin, Cap d'Antibes, 06160 ***Tel*** *04 92 93 13 30* ***Fax*** *04 92 93 15 04*

The Hotel Juana has recently exchanged its celebrated rooftop restaurant for this luxurious restaurant on the beach with high-tech touches and a vast terrace. Chef Francis Chauveau's cuisine is delicious and creative. Indulge in the grilled sea bass with lemons and marinated vegetables. Closed Tues, Wed (except Jul–Aug).

LA CADIERE D'AZUR Hostellerie Bérard P 🚸 ▤ ⛱ 🍷 ♿ €€€€€

Av Gabriel Peri, 83740 ***Tel*** *04 94 90 11 43* ***Fax*** *04 94 90 01 94*

This renowned hotel-restaurant in the converted buildings of an 11th-century convent has a fine view over the Bandol vineyards. Owners and chefs Rene and Jean François Bérard do marvelous things with fish and shellfish, including a sublime mussel soup flavored with saffron. Local Bandol wines. Closed Mon, Tue, Jan.

MARSEILLE Chez Madie (Les Galinettes) 🚸 ⛱ €€

138 quai du Port, 13002 ***Tel*** *04 91 90 40 87* ***Fax*** *04 91 31 44 74*

A Marseillais institution for generations (it is now in the hands of the granddaughter of the eponymous founder). Legendary *bouillabaisse*, *bourride*, and other fish dishes are complemented by tripe and pigs' trotters. Definitely not for vegetarians, nor for picky children. Closed Sun.

MARSEILLE Toinou 🚸 ▤ ⛱ €€

3 cours Saint-Louis, 13001 ***Tel*** *04 91 33 14 94*

This is the place for seafood platters in Marseille. Set on a lively square, Toinou started 40 years ago as a take-out counter. It still does a roaring take-out trade though many people now opt to dine in the simple dining room. For a taste of everything, try the Toinou Spécial for two people.

MARSEILLE Les Arcenaulx ▤ ♿ ⛱ 🍷 €€€

25 cours d'Estienne d'Orves, 13000 ***Tel*** *04 91 59 80 30* ***Fax*** *04 91 54 76 33*

In the former warehouse district north of the Vieux Port, Les Arcenaulx occupies the former premises of a 17th-century publisher. A great place to start or end an evening's bar-hopping in nearby streets. Dishes include mascarpone *velouté* with crab and croutons, cod filets in banana leaves, and chocolate tarte with caramel and grilled almonds. Closed Sun.

MARSEILLE Restaurant Michel ▤ €€€€€

6 rue des Catalans, 13007 ***Tel*** *04 91 52 30 63* ***Fax*** *04 91 54 76 33*

Bouillabaisse is the specialty of the house at this fine, busy brasserie. Other fish dishes include *bourride*, sardines, and the always reliable catch of the day, fresh and simply grilled. Popular with locals – get there early to be sure of a table. Wine list includes names from Bandol and Cassis.

MARTIGUES Le Miroir 🚸 🍴 €€€

4 rue Marcel Galdy, 13500 ***Tel*** *04 42 80 50 45*

Facing the small fishing port of Martigues with its colorful wooden boats, this restaurant specializes in fish. There is plenty of space, with six dining rooms and two terraces – choose an outside table for maximum charm. The cooking is simple yet tasty, with dishes such as mussels with fennel and saffron. Closed Sat lunch; Sun, Mon & Wed dinner.

MENTON Le Mirazur P ▤ ♿ 🍴 🍷 €€€€€

30 av Aristide Briand, 06500 ***Tel*** *04 92 41 86 86*

Argentinian-born Mauro Colagreco is a promising chef who has settled in Menton, where his contemporary restaurant boasts its own tropical garden. Like a painter, he decorates his plates with dabs and flourishes, often using wild herbs and flowers picked from the mountains. There is a good-value €35 lunch menu. Closed Mon–Tue.

MONACO Maya Bay P 🚸 ▤ ♿ 🍴 🍷 €€€€

24 av Princesse Grace, 98000 ***Tel*** *00 37 7 97 70 74 67*

Chef Olivier Streiff's punk haircut and black eyeliner is a tribute to the Doors, and his cooking has an equally rock 'n' roll style. A typical dish is duckling with banana, dried fruits, *confit* apple, and roasted juniper berries. The dining room has a lush, tropical feel and the restaurant has a separate sushi bar. Closed Mon–Sun; Nov.

MOUGINS Le Moulin de Mougins 🚸 ▤ 🍴 🍷 €€€€€

Notre-Dame-de-Vie, rte départementale 3, 06250 ***Tel*** *04 93 75 78 24* ***Fax*** *04 93 90 18 55*

Alain Llorca's 2-Michelin-star restaurant is the place for a special treat, with superb, imaginative cuisine that leans toward seafood prepared in new ways. The wines include some of the very best of Provence. The garden terrace is adorned by modern sculptures. Reservations are essential.

MOUSTIERS La Treille Muscate 🍴 🍷 €€€

Pl de l'Eglise, 04360 ***Tel*** *04 92 74 64 31* ***Fax*** *04 92 74 63 75*

Excellent food such as *pistou* of vegetables in this lovely little Provençal bistro, with a great location on the main square of one of the region's prettiest villages. Good value, with a choice of set menus and a decent wine list, La Treille Muscate is especially pleasant for a relaxed alfresco lunch. Closed Wed.

NICE Bistrot d'Antoine ▤ 🍴 €€

27 rue de la Préfecture, 06300 ***Tel*** *04 93 85 29 57*

Armand Crespo, formerly of Lou Cigalon in Valbonne, is the man behind the revival of this Niçoise bistro. He can often be seen buying produce at the nearby market. Meat off the grill is the main event: try the duck *magret* or the veal kidneys, which could make an offal-lover out of anyone. Well-chosen wines. Closed Sun–Mon; Aug.

VENCE Le Pigeonnier 🚸 ▤ 🍴 €€€

3 pl du Peyra, 06140 ***Tel*** *04 93 58 03 00*

At this traditional restaurant serving local cuisine the menu includes a large selection of fish, seafood, and meat dishes. In summer diners can enjoy the sunny terrace, while in winter the dining room is warmed by a large open fire. Closed Mon, Sun dinner (except Jul & Aug); Nov; Jan.

VENCE Les Bacchanales 🚸 ♿ 🍴 €€€

247 av de Provence ***Tel*** *04-93-24-19-19*

Christophe Dufau made his name in Tourrettes-sur-Loup before moving his restaurant into this slightly hard-to-find villa on the edge of Vence. His cooking is original without resorting to unnecessary flourishes. Typical of his style is an appetizer of caramelized melon with crumbled ricotta and spicy *soubressade* sauce. Closed Tue–Wed.

VILLEFRANCHE-SUR-MER L'Oursin Bleu ▤ ♿ 🍴 🍷 €€€

11 quai Courbet, 06230 ***Tel*** *04 93 01 90 12* ***Fax*** *04 93 01 80 45*

A bubbling aquarium in the foyer hints that this cheerful little eating place puts the accent on fresh fish. The location is delightful, on the quayside, with tables under umbrellas on the terrace and a dining room decorated with seafaring memorabilia. The ideal place for a long, lazy, summer lunch. Closed Tue; Nov–Mar; Jan.

CORSICA

AJACCIO Le 20123 🚸 ▤ 🍴 €€

2 rue su Roi de Rome, 2000 ***Tel*** *04 95 21 50 05*

Named for the tiny Corsican town of Pila-Canale, this restaurant aims to bring an authentic taste of the village to the city. You can eat on the lantern-lit terrace, in the dining room filled with bric-a-brac, or at a long shared table in the cellar. Try the *charcuterie* and hearty meat stews. Closed lunch; Feb.

AJACCIO Pampasgiolu ▤ 🍴 €€

15 rue de la Porta, 20000 ***Tel*** *04 95 50 71 52.*

Reserve in advance at this popular eating place in the old city, with its attractive, rustic dining rooms and small terrace. Try the *spuntini* (snack) platters of fish or meat local specialties or go for the veal with olives. Good desserts, including chestnut fondant. Closed lunch, Sun.

BASTIA A Casarella €€

6 rue Ste Croix, 20600 ***Tel*** *04 95 32 02 32*

Hidden in the maze of streets in the citadel area, this is a reliable place to try Corsican cuisine with the occasional luxury touch, as in brocciu (the local fresh cheese) cooked with *foie gras*. Among the chef's other specialties are stuffed sardines, veal roasted with herbs, and Corsican *crème brûlée.* Closed Sat lunch; Sun.

BASTIA Au Café des Intimes €€€

9 pl Hôtel de Ville, 20200 ***Tel*** *04 95 31 87 23*

Specializing in Middle-Eastern food, this animated restaurant in the bustling marketplace serves fresh fish in tagines and cous cous. If you are very hungry, try the "Royal" cous cous, a feast of chicken, lamb, spicy meatballs, and vegetables. Desserts include iced cream caramel with hot chocolate sauce. Closed Mon, Sun.

BONIFACIO Le Goeland Beach €€

Plage de la Tonnara ***Tel*** *04 95 73 02 51*

In the middle of a nature preserve, Tonnara beach creates a breathtaking setting for this waterfront restaurant. The specialty is fish grilled over the wood fire (priced by weight), but you can also try typically Corsican dishes such as aubergines (eggplant) baked with tomato sauce. Drop into the snack bar at any time of day. Closed Dec–mid-Mar.

CALVI Le Bout du Monde €€€

Plage du Calvi, 20260 ***Tel*** *04 95 65 15 41*

Excellent food at this friendly but classy beach spot. You'll be spoiled for choice between seafood platters, langoustine ravioli, scallops in orange butter, grilled rib of beef, or huge salads, followed by caramelized apple tart or chestnut cream. Closed dinner in winter.

CORTE U Museu €€

13 Quart Quatre Fountains, 20250 ***Tel*** *04 95 61 08 36*

At the foot of the citadelle in the old town, this large restaurant has several dining rooms, including a tree-shaded terrace. There is a wide choice of dishes ranging from pizzas, pastas, and salads to traditional Corsican dishes of white beans and lamb, *brocciu*-stuffed lasagne (stuffed with a Corsican cheese), and grilled meats with herbs. Closed Nov–Apr.

ILE ROUSSE A Siesta €€€€

Promenade à Marinella, 20220 ***Tel*** *04 95 60 28 74* ***Fax*** *04 95 60 27 03*

Fresh seafood is the pride of this trendy beach restaurant. On hot nights they'll move the tables directly onto the beach so you can dine under the stars on spidercrabs, lobsters, or *bouillabaisse*. Other choices include seafood ravioli and carpaccio of fish. Excellent desserts and wine list. Closed Nov–Mar.

PORTO VECCHIO Restaurant Le Tourisme €€€

Cours Napoléon, 20137 ***Tel*** *04 95 70 06 45*

A popular establishment in the upper town, facing the church. This friendly place, decorated in a brasserie style, serves Provençal and Corsican specialties. Large choice of seafood, fish, and meat dishes, featuring Corsican veal and game in season.

PORTO VECCHIO Le Bistro €€€

4 Quai Pascale Paoli, Port de Plaisance, 20137 ***Tel*** *04 95 70 22 96*

Lively eating spot situated in the yachting harbor in the lower town. Pretty dining room and large terrace. Fresh seafood with a choice of red mullet with anchovies and tomatoes, sea bream, or grilled spiny lobster. Excellent *tartare* of beef or civet of wild boar, in season. There's a new *tapas* bar and a good choice of *crêpes suzettes*. Closed Feb.

PORTO VECCHIO Casadelmar €€€€€

Rte de Palombaggia ***Tel*** *04 95 72 34 34*

In a contemporary luxury hotel a few minutes from the center of Porto Vecchio, this restaurant makes luxurious use of seasonal, mostly local ingredients. Dishes often have an Italian slant, as in raviolini of beef tartare with aged pecorino and 25-year-old balsamic vinegar. The hotel also has a more casual restaurant. Closed Nov–Apr.

PROPRIANO Chez Parenti €€€

10 av Napoléon ***Tel*** *04 95 76 12 14*

Founded in 1935 and run since then by the Parenti family, this restaurant was originally a fisherman's shack – it still has a modest façade but the terrace overlooking the sea will soon make you forget it. The specialty is freshly caught seafood, though you will also find delicious meat dishes. Save room for the Corsican cheeses. Closed Mon lunch; Nov–Apr.

SARTENE Auberge Santa Barbara €€€€

Alzone (3 km [2miles] out of Sartène on the road to Propriano), 20100 ***Tel*** *04 95 77 09 06* ***Fax*** *04 95 77 09 09*

Outdoor eatery in lovely gardens, owned by Corsica's foremost female chef, Gisèle Lovichi. Choose between homemade charcuterie or country soup with its vegetable salad, and stuffed leg of lamb or saddle of lamb with herb crust. Finish with *fiadone*, a dessert made with Corsican cheese, lemons, and eggs. Closed mid-Oct–Mar, Mon.

ST-FLORENT La Rascasse €€€

Quai d'Honneur, 20217 ***Tel*** *04 95 37 06 99* ***Fax*** *04 95 35 00 08*

Inventive cooking in this stylish fish restaurant in a prime position on the port. Ensconce yourself on the terrace and study the yachts as you wait for your order of fish soup, seafood risotto, or grilled squid. Try the classic *bouillabaisse* or a grilled lobster, and leave room for one of the sublime desserts. Closed Wed (except Jul & Aug).

Shopping in France

Olive Oil from Baux

Shopping in France is a delight. Whether you go to the hypermarkets and department stores, or seek out the small specialist stores and markets, you will be tempted by stylish French presentation and the quality of goods on offer. Renowned for its food and wine, France also offers world-famous fashion, perfume, pottery, porcelain, and crystal. This section provides guidelines on opening hours, and the range of goods stocked by the different types of stores. There are also details of quintessentially French products that are worth hunting down and a size conversion chart to aid clothes shopping.

Fresh nectarines and melons on sale at a market stall

OPENING HOURS

Food stores open anywhere between 7–8am and close around noon for lunch. In the north, the lunch break generally lasts for 2 hours; in the south, it is 3–4 hours (except in resorts, where it is shorter). After lunch, most food stores re-open until 7pm or later.

Bakeries open early and close early, although many stay open until 1pm or later, to catch the late baguette buyers and to serve a range of lunchtime snacks.

Supermarkets, department stores, and most hypermarkets remain open all day, with no lunchtime closure.

General opening hours for non-food stores are 9am–6pm Monday through Saturday, often with a break for lunch. Many of these stores are closed on Monday mornings, and the smaller stores may stay closed all day. In the tourist regions, however, stores usually open every day in high season.

Sunday is by far the quietest shopping day, although most food stores (and news stands) are open in the morning. Virtually every store in France is closed on Sunday afternoon.

HYPERMARKETS AND DEPARTMENT STORES

Hypermarkets (*hypermarchés* or *grandes surfaces*) can be found on the outskirts of every sizeable town: look for signs indicating *centre commercial*. Much bigger than supermarkets, they sell mainly groceries, but their other lines include clothing, home accessories, and electronic equipment. They also sell discount gasoline. **Carrefour**, **Casino**, **Auchan**, **Leclerc**, and **Intermarché** are the biggest.

Department stores *(grands magasins)*, such as **Monoprix** and **Franprix** are usually found in town centers. The more upmarket **Printemps** and **Galeries Lafayette** also have out-of-town locations.

Boulangerie

A tempting local bakery

SPECIALIST STORES

One of the pleasures of shopping in France is that specialist food stores continue to flourish, despite the influx of supermarkets and hypermarkets. The *boulangerie* (bakery) is frequently combined with a *pâtisserie* selling cakes and pastries. The *traiteur* sells prepared foods. *Fromagers* (cheese shops) and other stores specializing in dairy products *(produits laitiers)* may be combined, but the *boucherie* (butcher) and *charcuterie* (pork butcher-delicatessen) are often separate stores. For general groceries go to an *épicerie* or *alimentation*, but don't confuse this with an *épicerie fine*– a delicatessen.

Cleaning and household products are available from a *droguerie*, while hardware is bought from a *quincaillerie*. The term *papeterie* (stationer) covers both the expensive, specialist retailers and their hypermarket equivalents.

MARKETS

This guide lists the market day for every town featured in the Area by Area section. To find out where the market is, ask a passerby for *le marché*. Markets are held in the morning and usually finish promptly at noon. Look for local producers, including those with only one or two special items to sell, since their goods are often more reasonably priced and of better quality than stalls with multiple items. By law, price tags include the origin of all produce: *pays* means local. Chickens from Bresse are marketed wearing a red, white, and blue badge with the name of the producer. If you are visiting markets over several weeks, look for items just coming into season, such as fresh walnuts, the first wild asparagus, early artichokes, or wild strawberries. At the market, you can also buy spices and herbs, some offbeat peculiarities (such as decorative cabbages), shoes, and clothing.

The year is full of seasonal regional markets in France, specializing in such things as truffles, hams, garlic, *foie gras*, and livestock. *Foires artisanales* may be held at the same time as the seasonal markets, selling local produce and crafts.

Sausages and cheeses, regional specialties on offer in a Lyon market

REGIONAL PRODUCE

French regional specialties are available outside their area of origin, but it is more interesting to buy them locally since their creation and flavor reflect the traditions, tastes, and climate of the region.

Provence, in the south, prides itself on the quality of its olive oil, the best of which is made from the first cold pressing, lovingly decanted every day for a week. If you cannot get to a niche olive oil producer in Provence, head to **Oliviers et Co** which has branches throughout the country, and sells an excellent selection of oils. Be sure to indulge in a tasting session to sample the flavors. In the temperate north, the delicious Camembert cheese is the product of fresh Norman milk that has been cured for at least three weeks.

Popular drinks are also associated with particular regions. Pastis, made from aniseed, is popular in the south. Calvados, made in Normandy from apples, is popular in the north. Crème de Fruit de Dijon, the secret ingredient to many a good cocktail or dessert, comes in many flavors (from peach to wild strawberry) in addition to the well-known blackcurrant – **Crème de Cassis**. Visit local producers to buy good versions of this thick, alcoholic syrup.

Provençal dried herbs for culinary use and for making teas

Pastis 51, drunk in the south

To a large extent, location determines the quality of regional produce. For example, the culinary tradition of Lyon *(see pp380–1)*, France's premier gastronomic city, stems from the proximity of Charolais cattle, Bresse chickens and pork, wild game from La Dombes, and the finest Rhône Valley wines.

Alongside sachets of dried herbs from Provence and braided strings of garlic and onions, be sure to buy the seasoning loved by all self-respecting francophile cooks – salt from the Ile de Ré *(see p416)* or Guerande. If you happen to be visiting the area, check out the salt flats and pick up the crumbly coarse grains at a local market. The Fleur de Sel is a delicate flaky variety and the Sel Marin is a gray, coarser type of salt.

BEAUTY PRODUCTS

French women are renowned for their beauty, and there is a plethora of good beauty products in France. The major French labels, such as **Chanel** and **Guerlain**, are available overseas, but die-hard cosmetics fans should scour the local beauty counters to find special products that are only on sale in France.

While in Paris, beauty junkies must visit the Chanel store on the rue Cambon and the Guerlain store on the Champs Elysées to buy scent that is only available in those particluar stores. Throughout the rest of the country, supermarket brands such as Evian, Eau Thermale d'Avene, and Barbara Gould are huge hits with magazine beauty editors. In particular, the cold cream by Eau Thermale d'Avene, the foaming cleanser by Barbara Gould, and Evian's facial toning gel can be found in many a fashionista's make-up bag. Similarly many a groomed Parisian swears by Nuxe's cult body oil *Huile Prodigeuse*, Caudalie's *Vinotherapary Cabernet* body scrub (with grape extracts), and Elancyl's anti-cellulite toning cream.

Oenobiol tanning supplement capsules and Phytomer's hair care range are considered absolutely necessary by St-Tropez beach lovers looking to lessen sun damage to hair and skin.

A more traditional approach to French grooming can be found by buying *savon de marseilles* – good-quality traditional soap made with plenty of oil.

True scent aficionados should head for Grasse *(see p517)*, the perfume capital of the world. Be sure to visit the three largest scent factories, **Fragonard**, **Molinard**, and **Galimard**, all of which have scent available for purchase.

ACCESSORIES

French fashion is rightfully famous, but aside from the main couture labels and stores *(see pp142–4)*, the best way to get the French look is to accessorize *à la Français.* In keeping with the French tradition of specialist local trades, there are certain regions that excel in producing accessories.

For a start, a hand-made umbrella from Aurillac *(see p364)* is guaranteed to chase away rainy-day blues in style. The best-known umbrella manufacturers are **L'Ondée au Parapluie d'Aurillac**, **Piganiol**, and **Delos**, who will customize one for you with a photograph of whomever you choose to chase away the storms.

Beautiful hands are easily available courtesy of the glove trade in Millau. Visit **L'Atelier Gantier** (the Glove Workshop) to pick up a stunning pair of expertly hand-stiched leather gloves in one of a seemingly endless array of colors.

More casual chic can be found with brightly colored wicker baskets from local markets and hardware stores. These quickly turn a casual ensemble into boho-chic outfit. Beachside boutiques are great places for picking up stylish sarongs, beads, and bracelets for any trip to *la plage* (the beach). **K Jacques** sandals from St-Tropez have long been must-have items among the fashion set.

When it is time to hit the slopes rather than the beach, French skiwear labels such as Rossignol can be a good buy, but only at the end of the season. At the height of *piste* time, ski resort stores are expensive. Once the snow starts to melt, however, ex-rental gear including skis and boots can be picked up relatively cheaply, while ski jackets, hats, and *après* ski wear tends to be gloriously cut-price.

HOUSEHOLD GOODS

If you are in the market for housewares, the best stores are **Ikea**, **Alinea**, and **Habitat**. **Truffaut** sells garden furniture, and **Leroy Merlin** is the hypermarket of the home improvement world.

It is surprisingly rare to see the whole range of kitchen goods in a specialist store. Instead, try the kitchen section of department stores. General hardware stores stock cast-iron cooking equipment. White china is sold in specialist shops.

Traveling through Normandy provides the perfect excuse for sampling many wonderful products, not least the *crème de chantilly*, but for tableware fans or lingerie lovers, the lace industry here is also guaranteed to please. While the **Alençon** lace is extremely expensive and mainly finds its way onto couture sold in top Parisian stores, hitting the stores in Argentan, Chantilly (*see pp204–5*), and Bayeux (*see pp252–3*) is likely to yield exquisite yet affordable pieces. It is worth hunting around for lace pieces which can be used to liven up an outfit: lace has made a fashion comeback in recent times and a customized delicate flower on a bag or blouse is *à la mode.*

Lace curtains are easy to come by, as are lovely tablecloths. The easiest way to be sure not to miss anything is to take "the lace road" and tour the lace museums and boutiques of Alençon, Argentan, Caen (*see pp253–4*), Courseulles, Villedieu-les-Poêles, and La Perrière.

With a beautiful tablecloth in place, you can proceed to pick up stunning crystal from which to sniff, swirl, and sip great French wine. The most famous French crystal maker, **Baccarat**, has a museum where you can take in some of their amazing creations and a store where you can buy a little Baccarat bauble to take home with you. A cheaper French crystal maker which is still elegant for every-day wear is **Crystal d'Arques**. You can tour the small museum in the factory and buy stemware at discount prices in the factory store.

Pottery is available at reasonable prices, especially near centers of production, such as Quimper (*see p274)* in Brittany, Aubagne near Marseille, and Vallauris *(see p522)* near Grasse.

Porcelain from Limoges (*see p356*) sets off any meal beautifully: a dinner set from the **Royal Limoges** factory store can be a great investment.

Similarly, stunning **Aubusson** tapestries are seriously expensive and unlikely to be an impulse vacation purchase. However, interior design fanatics could do worse than plan their tapestry or rug purchase

SIZE CHART

Women's dresses, coats, and skirts								
French	36	38	40	42	44	46	48	
British	8	10	12	14	16	18	20	
American	4	6	8	10	12	14	16	
Women's shoes								
French	36	37	38	39	40	41		
British	3	4	5	6	7	8		
American	5	6	7	8	9	10		
Men's suits								
French	44	46	48	50	52	54	56	58
British	34	36	38	40	42	44	46	48
American	34	36	38	40	42	44	46	48
Men's shirts								
French	36	38	39	41	42	43	44	45
British	14	15	15½	16	16½	17	17½	18
American	14	15	15½	16	16½	17	17½	18
Men's shoes								
French	39	40	41	42	43	44	45	46
British	6	7	7½	8	9	10	11	12
American	7	7½	8	8½	9½	10½	11	11½

around a trip to the home of weaving in Aubusson *(see pp356–7).*

Finishing touches are fun to shop for and can certainly be more frivolous. Be sure to visit the local markets for gingham cotton napkins, linen cleaning cloths, and seafood accoutrements (such as lobster crackers and oyster forks). In Provence be sure to stock up on cheap, brightly colored cookware – tagines, terra cotta bowls, and painted plates are all in abundance.

WINE

To buy wine straight from the vineyards and wine co-operatives, follow the tasting *(dégustation)* signs to vineyards *(domaines)*. You may be expected to buy at least one bottle, except where a small fee is charged for wine-tasting. Wine co-operatives make and sell the wine of small producers. Here you can buy wine in 5- and 10-liter containers *(en tonneau)*, as well as in bottles. Wine sold *en tonneau* is duty-free, and customers receive a permit *(laissez-passer)* indicating destination. Bottled wine sold by co-ops is not duty-free. **Nicolas** is France's main wine retailer, with many branches.

FACTORY OUTLETS

The French sales system is very rigid *(see p140)* but true bargain hunters know that factory stores have some items on sale all year round. The biggest factory outlets in France can be found in and around Troyes in outlet malls called **Marques Avenue** (Brands Avenue), **Marques City** (Brands City), and **McArthur Glen**, a large American outlet. They sell everything from Yves Saint Laurent suits to Black and Decker drills, Cristofle silverware, and Bonpoint babygros. As different an experience as you can get from browsing around French markets and local specialist stores, what factory outlets lack in charm they make up for in bargains. If a whole new wardrobe is in order, it is definitely worth a trip.

DIRECTORY

HYPERMARKETS AND DEPARTMENT STORES

For details of addresses, visit the following websites

Auchan
www.auchan.fr

Carrefour
www.carrefour.fr

Casino
www.supercasino.fr

Franprix
www.franprix.fr

Galeries Lafayette
www.galerieslafayette.com

Intermarché
www.intermarche.com

Leclerc
www.e-leclerc.com

Monoprix
www.monoprix.fr

Printemps
www.printemps.com

REGIONAL PRODUCE

Crème de Cassis
Gabriel Boudier
14 rue de Cluj
21007 Dijon
Tel *03 80 74 33 33*

Oliviers et Co
For details of addresses, visit **www**.oliviers-co.com

BEAUTY PRODUCTS

Chanel
31 rue Cambon 75008
Paris ***Tel*** *01 42 86 26 00*
www.chanel.com

Fragonard
20 bd Fragonard 06130
Grasse
Tel *04 93 36 44 65*
www.fragonard.com

Galimard
73 route de Cannes
06130 Grasse
Tel *04 93 09 20 00*
www.galimard.com

Guerlain
68 av des Champs
Elysées, 75008 Paris
Tel *01 45 62 52 57*
www.guerlain.fr

Molinard
60 bd Victor Hugo 06130
Grasse
Tel *04 93 36 01 62*
www.molinard.com

ACCESSORIES

L'Atelier Gantier
21 rue Droite
12100 Millau
Tel *05 65 60 81 50*

Delos
14 rue Rocher
15000 Aurillac
Tel *04 71 48 86 85*
www.delos-france.com

K Jacques
25 rue Allard
83990 St Tropez
Tel *04 94 97 41 50*
www.lestropeziennes.com

L'Ondée au Parapluie d'Aurillac
27 rue Victor Hugo
15000 Aurillac
Tel *04 71 48 29 53*

Piganiol
9 rue Ampère
15000 Aurillac
Tel *04 71 63 42 60*

HOUSEHOLD GOODS

Alençon Lace Museum
Cour carrée de la Dentelle
61000 Alençon
Tel *02 33 32 40 07*

Alinea
www.alinea.fr

Aubusson
Manufacture Saint-Jean
3 rue Saint-Jean
23200 Aubusson
Tel *05 55 66 10 08*

Baccarat
20 rue des Cristalleries
54120 Baccarat
Tel *03 83 76 60 06*
www.baccarat.com

Cristal d'Arques
Zone industrielle, 62510
Arques ***Tel*** *03 21 95 46 47*

Habitat
www.habitat.net

Ikea
www.ikea.com

Leroy Merlin
www.leroymerlin.fr

Royal Limoges
28 rue Donzelot
Accès par le quai du Port du Naveix
87000 Limoges
Tel *05 55 33 27 37*
www.royal-limoges.fr

Truffaut
www.truffaut.com

WINE

Nicolas
www.nicolas.com

FACTORY OUTLETS

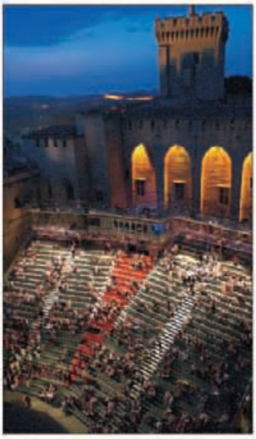
Marques Avenue
Av de la Maille, 10800
Saint Julien les Villas
Tel *03 25 82 80 80*
www.marquesavenue.com

Marques City
35 rue Danton
10150 Pont Sainte Marie
Tel *03 25 46 37 48*

McArthur Glen
ZI des magasin d'usines du Nord 10150
Pont Sainte Marie
Tel *03 25 70 47 10*

Entertainment in France

Paris is one of the world's great entertainment cities, but France's reputation as a center of excellence in the arts extends well beyond the capital. Whether you prefer to attend theater or catch a movie, listen to jazz or techno, or watch modern dance, the country has a wide array of choices. The regional chapters in this guide will give you an insight into local gems, while these pages provide an overview of entertainment trends and events. Major festivals, such as Avignon and Cannes, occupy an important place in French hearts, so reserve well ahead if you plan to attend. For small festivals and local happenings, tourist office websites have up-to-the-minute listings.



The spectacular setting of Avignon Theater at night

THEATER

Going to the theater in France can be as formal or intimate as you choose. A trip to a major theater can involve dressing up, making special *souper* (late dinner) reservations at a nearby restaurant specializing in theater-goers, and quaffing exorbitantly priced champagne during the interval. On the other hand, a trip to a small-scale theater can be about casual dress, cheap tickets, and an intimate experience.

Recent years have seen French movie stars head back to the stage, such as Gérard Depardieu and Fanny Ardant in *The Beast in the Jungle*, reflecting the popularity of the theater. Whatever the genre, the French love an evening *au théâtre,* be it a French farce or a festival of street theater.

France's biggest theater festival is at **Avignon** *(see p503)* which is held during three weeks in July and is mainly open-air. It also includes ballets, drama, and classical concerts. Many outdoor theaters operate in summer and are often free. Contact the town's tourist office for a program.

Circus is also dear to the French. In small towns, summertime is often heralded by the circus loudspeaker strapped to the top of a car cruising the streets and inviting adults and children alike to flock to the big top.

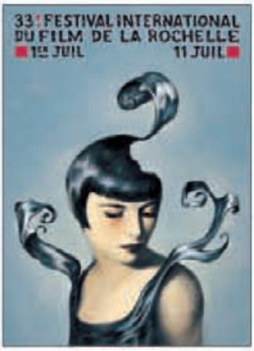
Large-scale *spectacles* or shows are another popular form of theater, be they massive musicals or *son et lumières* performances. Marionettes are also given due respect in France, where puppet shows go beyond traditional Punch and Judy territory.

MOVIES

La Septième Art, as the French refer to the movies, reveals the respect with which the genre is held. From the Lumière brothers and their innovative technology to contemporary critical smashes, such as *The Chorus* and *Amélie Poulain* to the *Nouvelle Vague*, France's influence on movies is undeniable. The French are supportive of local, independent movie theaters, and small towns are often fiercely protective of their screening center. So when visiting the movie theater, try to avoid the behemoths of UGC and Gaumont and instead head to a tiny *salle de cinéma*. If your language skills won't stretch to seeing a French film while in France, be sure to catch the VO *(Version Originale)* of any other language films, which will be screened in the original language. VF *(Version Française)* denotes a dubbed screening in French. As any expatriate in France knows, hearing a strange French voice coming out of a Hollywood A-lister's mouth is likely to dull any enjoyment of a major blockbuster movie.

Another thing to bear in mind is the French attitude to snacking. Essentially it is only acceptable for children, and even then only at a designated time after school. While French movie theaters do have concession stands selling popcorn and candy, it is only the foreigners who can be heard munching throughout the tense parts of the film. On the other hand, some French theaters have bars and restaurants attached, so that movie goers can dissect the movie over a meal. Many theaters run mini directors' festivals with several movies shown back to back, attracting serious film buffs and those curious to learn more.

As the fame of **Cannes** *(see p520)* reflects, film festivals are taken seriously by the French. Cannes itself is a maelstrom of media hype, old-school glamor, and shiny new cash. It is an amazing experience if you can get tickets to any of the movies or parties, but these are notoriously hard to get since they are by invitation only.



Poster promoting La Rochelle international film festival

Red carpet and razzamatazz at the Cannes film festival

An easier way to experience the fabulous side of film is to attend the lower-key American film festival in **Deauville** *(see p255)*. This event is seen as a major launching pad for U.S. independent films looking for European release, and attracts big stars and cult directors alike. The competition section of the festival has ten films in the running each year. The chic town of Deauville is small and accessible and, while the chance of bumping into a huge star is slim, it feels possible.

The film festival in **La Rochelle** *(see p416)*, the second largest in France, does not attract big actors, but film fans will not be disappointed with the large selection of movies on offer.

A truly great way to catch a movie in France is at an open-air festival. There are many such events throughout the country; check local listings so as not to miss out. And if you are lucky enough to be in Arles *(see pp508–9)*, an epic experience can be had at their annual showing of historical Roman block-busters, screened against the backdrop of a magnificent Roman amphitheater. Contact **Théâtre Antique** for details.

DANCE

Dancing is a way of life in France. From formal lessons to spontaneous outbreaks of grooving in the village square, moving to music is central to all types of celebration. Most foreigners' first experience with French dancers occurs in a nightclub and is, more often than not, accompanied by an expression of surprise. In even the most upscale nightclub, it is not unusual to see trendy twentysomethings jiving away to *le rock*, a formal form of rock and roll dancing. French teens are taught *le rock* before being unleashed on the party scene, and a basic understanding of its signature twirls and twists is considered vital to being a good dancer.

The love affair with formal dance sessions starts young, but lasts until late in life: tea dances are a major fixture of most older people's social calendars. Community centers, sports auditoriums, restaurants, and chic nightclubs often host *thé dansants* (tea dances), normally in the late afternoon or early evening.

Another way to experience French dance culture is to head to a *guingette*, a moored party boat with a convivial, old-fashioned atmosphere. People here dance the *quadrille* or the *musette* to accordion music, spinning around on the banks of the river. While the guingettes were traditionally clustered around the Marne river, they have now spread throughout France and are definitely worth seeking out if your travels take you close to a major tributary.

In general, lots of dancing takes place near to water in France. Those looking to get into the groove in the south should take their dancing shoes to the quays in Bordeaux and Marseille.

Of course, once a year, on July 13 and 14, a very unusual impromptu dancing venue springs up around the country with the *Bals des Pompiers*. The "Firemen's Balls" are a national institution when the French of all ages head down to their local fire station to celebrate Bastille day by dancing to everything from Piaf to hip hop until the early hours of the morning.

If you would prefer to watch rather than participate, there are several major dance festivals that celebrate the dance traditions of different regions. The **Gannat festival** held in the Auvergne *(see p353)* is a fine example of a regional dance extravaganza, as is the **Festival Interceltique de Lorient** *(see p270)* which celebrates Celtic music and dance. The main international dance festivals are held in **Montpellier** *(see pp494–5)* and **Lyon** *(see pp378–81)*. These provide a wonderful opportunity to enjoy major contemporary dance talent from around the world.

Wonderful costumes and choreography at the Montpellier dance festival

MUSIC

The French music scene is about far more than Johnny Hallyday, although it must be said that the ageing rocker still manages to sell stacks of records, concert tickets, and gossip magazines. It should also be pointed out that he is actually Belgian, but the French have taken him to their hearts anyway. Neither is the scene just about Bob Sinclair, Daft Punk, Air, and "Le French Touch." However, the fact that both dance music and rock happily coexist in the French charts reflects a truism of the music scene over here, which is that there is space for all kinds of tunes. *Chanson* has made a huge comeback over recent years as the success of the movement's poster boy Benjamin Biolay reveals. The new French *chanson* scene is dominated by Biolay, although other well-known artists in this genre include Vincent Delerm and Benabar.

Female crooners are also all the rage; listen to Lara Fabian or reality TV pop star Chimène Badi for confirmation of this.

The other recent musical phenomenon in France came off the back of a hit movie *The Chorus* (*Les Choristes*, 2004) which has seen impressive soundtrack sales, and one can at least speculate on the impact it might have had on attendance at evensong.

The event which best symbolizes this musical cornucopia is the Fête de la Musique. Every year on June 21, France resonates to the sound of this national music festival. Amateur and professional musicians alike set up their stages throughout villages and towns and peform. The best way to enjoy this is to walk around and try and take in as many different "concerts" as possible, but be aware that for some wannabe rock stars this is their only chance to shine, regardless of whether they can sing or not. Musical quality aside, what is most impressive about the Fête de la Musique is the sheer number of genres that one can hear in a few streets. Ranging from full orchestras to one-man rap artists, you can expect to hear everything from accordion music to panpipes, *chanson*, hip hop and electro.

If you prefer your festivals a little more specialized, visit one of the events focusing on the very best of everything from chamber music to jazz. The July **Festival of Francofolies** in La Rochelle *(see p416)* brings together French music enthusiasts from around the world just as **Jazz in Antibes** draws top performers to this chic seaside town *(see p521)*. The **Chorégies d'Orange**, France's oldest opera festival, takes place throughout July and August in the well-preserved Roman amphitheater, which retains perfect acoustics. The organ festival in **Aubusson** *(see pp356–7)* focuses around the amazing organ in the Sainte Croix church and **La Roque d'Anthéron** looks set to continue to pull in piano-loving crowds. The **Colmar international festival** *(see p227)* is a major draw for classical music buffs, and the **Aix festival** *(see p511)* is a must for any serious fan, while the **Montpellier** *(see pp494–5)* **and Radio France** event appeals to music lovers throughout the world.

CLUBS

Cool clubs and artful partying most definitely exist outside the capital city, despite what Parisians may believe. There are, of course, bars, clubs, and discos throughout the country, and night owls looking to dance are unlikely to be disappointed by the range of options on offer. Small local venues can be great fun, and community events such as open-air parties and festivals are almost always worth a look.

In general, nightclubs open late and even in small towns, don't really get going until after midnight. The French are more likely to nurse a few drinks rather than dash around buying multiple rounds, and shots are almost unheard of over here. It is considered uncouth to drink wine outside of mealtimes, although champagne is always a good thing! The prevailing custom is to join together with friends and buy a bottle of spirits between you. The nightclub will present you with plenty of mixers and – the big benefit of going for this option – you will usually get a table all to yourselves. Tables are generally reserved for those in possession of a full bottle of spirits; a single gin and tonic does not warrant a seat. As extravagant as this may seem, it is generally cheaper than buying individual drinks for four or more people.

In terms of dress code, trainers are almost always forbidden, and the dressier the better could be seen as the rule. In house or hip-hop clubs strict dress codes tend to be relaxed. However, in more traditional *boites de nuit* (night clubs) getting glammed-up is the way to go. Clubs with difficult door policies can often be outfoxed by late diners. If you are worried about getting in, call ahead and make a dinner reservation. Alternatively flaunt designer labels at the doormen.

To experience one of France's most glamorous clubs head to **Les Planches** – an uber-chic spot outside Deauville *(see p255)*. Aside from its swimming pool in which starlets frolick at 3am, vintage cars tear around town rounding up party goers with a generally hedonistic atmosphere, Les Planches offers a friendly, fun vibe.

Up in the mountains **Le Privilege** in Chamonix *(see p322)* and **Le Loft** in Méribel are jumping Alpine party places.

The Cote d'Azur *(see pp499–531)* is, of course, renowned for its hedonistic nightlife. **Les Caves du Roy** in the Hotel Byblos and **Nikki Beach** in St-Tropez *(see p516)* are perfect for the jet set, while **Jimmy'z** in Monaco *(see pp530–1)* is the place to hang out with highrollers.

SPECTATOR SPORTS

Sporting enthusiasts are spoiled for choice in France, with opportunities to indulge in spectator sports throughout the country. If you don't want to wait to see the *grande finale* of the **Tour de France** in Paris, why not see it start in Brittany *(see pp268–85)*. Alternatively, taking in the spectacle from a tiny village en route is a great experience (drivers beware: the Tour takes precedence and the traffic will be stopped for a very, very long time).

If football is more your thing, then head to the Olympic stadia to catch huge teams, such as **Lyon** and **Marseille**, in action.

Surfing fans should make for Biarritz *(see p452)*, Lacanau *(see p424)* and Hossegor *(see p424)* to watch the tournaments there, while ski aficionados might want to watch the European Cup in Les Trois Vallées *(see p322)*.

Golfers flock to the **PGA Open** held outside Paris and to the **LPGA in Evian**, which is the world's second most valuable tournament after the U.S. Open.

Riders will be drawn to one of France's national studs at the **Haras National de Pompadour** for dressage, show-jumping, and other competitions throughout the year. Similarly, equine enthusiasts should not miss out on exciting horse racing at the renowned **Chantilly Racecourse**.

The **Le Mans** 24-hour car race is an institution, as is the famous **Grand Prix** in Monaco *(see pp530–31)*. The **French Grand Prix** at Magny Cours, south of Nevers *(see pp339–40)*, is also well worth a visit.

No visitor to France in the summer should miss out on one of the greatest spectator sports of them all: head to the village square and take in a game of *petanque* (also known as *boules*).

DIRECTORY

THEATER

Avignon Theater Festival
www.festival-avignon.com
Tel *04 90 14 14 14*

MOVIES

Cannes Film Festival
www.festival-cannes.fr

Deauville Film Festival
www.festival-deauville.com

La Rochelle Film Festival
www.festival-larochelle.org

Théâtre Antique d'Arles
Association Peplum
Tel *04 90 93 19 55*
www.festivalpeplum-arles.com

DANCE

Festival Interceltique de Lorient
Tel *02 97 21 24 29*
www.festival-interceltique.com

Gannat Festival
Tel *08 25 80 07 50*
www.gannat.com

Montpellier Festival
Tel *08 00 60 07 40*
www.montpellierdanse.com

Lyon Festival
Tel *04 72 07 41 41*
www.biennale-de-lyon.org

MUSIC

Aix Festival
Tel *04 42 17 34 34*
www.festival-aix.com

Aubusson Festival
Tel *05 55 66 32 12*
www.orgue-aubusson.org

Choregies d'Orange
Tel *04 90 34 24 24*
www.choregies.asso.fr

Colmar International Festival
Tel *03 89 20 68 97*
www.festival-colmar.com

Festival of Francofolies
Tel *05 46 50 55 77*
www.francofolies.fr

Jazz in Antibes
Tel *04 92 90 53 00*
www.antibesjuanlespins.com

Radio France and Montpellier Festival
Tel *04 67 02 02 01*
www.festivalradiofrance montpellier.com

La Roque d'Antheron
Tel *04 42 50 51 15*
www.festival-piano.com

CLUBS

Le Loft
Parc Olympique,
La Chaudanne 73550.
Méribel.
Tel *04 79 08 65 02*
www.leloftmeribel.com

Le Privilege
Rue des Moulins
74400 Chamonix.
Tel *04 50 53 29 10*
www.barleprivilege.com

Les Caves du Roy
Av Paul Signac
83990 St-Tropez.
Tel *04 94 56 68 00*
www.byblos.com

Jimmy'z
Le Sporting Club,
Av Princesse Grace,
Monte Carlo.
Tel *00 377 98 06 73 73*

Nikki Beach
Route de Epi
Ramatuelle
83350 St-Tropez.
Tel *04 94 79 82 04*
www.nikkibeach.com

Les Planches
Les Longs Champs
14910 Blonville
sur Mer.
Tel *02 31 87 58 09*

SPECTATOR SPORTS

Chantilly Racecourse
Rue Plaine des Aigles,
Chantilly, Oise.
Tel *03 44 62 44 00*

French Grand Prix
Magny Cours, 58170.
Tel *03 86 21 80 00*
www.fia.com

Grand Prix
Automobile Club de
Monaco.
Tel *00 377 93 15 26 00*
www.fia.com

Haras National de Pompadour
Tel *08 11 90 21 31*
www.haras-nationaux.fr

LPGA in Evian
www.evianmasters.com

Le Mans
www.lemans.org
Tel *02 43 40 24 24*

Olympique Lyon
350 av Jean Jaurès 69007
Lyon. **Tel** *04 72 76 76 04*
www.olweb.fr

Olympique de Marseille
3 bd Michelet
13008 Marseille.
Tel *04 91 33 20 01*
www.om.net

PGA Open
www.pgafrance.net

Tour de France
www.letour.fr

Specialist Vacations and Outdoor Activities

France offers an amazing variety of leisure and sports activities, making it a wonderful choice for a specialist vacation. The French take great pride in the *art de vivre*, which entails not only eating and drinking well, but also pursuing special interests and hobbies. For the best in entertainment and spectator sports, festivals and annual events, see *France through the Year* on pages 36–9. Information on leisure and sporting activities in a particular region is available from the tourist offices listed for each town in this guide. The suggestions below cover the most popular, and also the more unusual, pursuits.

Students honing their culinary skills on a Hostellerie Bérard cooking course

SPECIALIST VACATIONS

French government tourist offices *(see p669)* have an extensive range of information on travel companies that offer special interest vacations. and can send you a copy of *The Traveler in France Reference Guide*.

If you want to improve your French, many language courses are available. These are very often combined with other activities, such as cooking or painting. For more information, request *Cours de français pour étudiants étrangers* (French courses for foreign students) from the **French Institute** in London.

Young people can enjoy a French-speaking vacation by working part time on the restoration of historic sites with **Union REMPART** *(Union pour la Réhabilitation et Entretien des Monuments et du Patrimoine Artistique)*.

A tantalizing array of gastronomic courses is on offer to introduce you to classical French cuisine or the cooking of a particular region, for example the **Hostellerie Bérard**. For experienced cooks, more advanced courses are available. Wine-appreciation courses are always popular.

There are numerous art and crafts courses throughout the country, catering to everyone from the absolute beginner to the most accomplished artist.

Nature lovers can enjoy the national parks *(parcs nationaux)* and join organized bird-watching and botanical trips in many areas, including the Camargue, the Cévennes, and Corsica.

Le Guide des Jardins en France, published by Actes Sud, is a useful reference guide when visiting France's many beautiful gardens.

Painting the picturesque French landscape

GOLF

There are golf courses all over France, especially along the north and south coasts and in Aquitaine. Players have to reach a minimum standard and obtain a licence in order to play, so be sure to take your handicap certificate with you. Top courses offer weekend or longer tutored breaks geared to all levels of experience. The **Fédération Française de Golf** will provide a list of all the courses throughout France.

Specialist golf packages, including deluxe hotel accommodations, can be ideal for serious golfers and their non-golfing partners alike. The spectacular Hotel Royal and its renowned **Evian Masters** golf course is a very exclusive, pampering option. The 18-hole course is guaranteed to appeal to fans. There is also a spa and five swimming pools, perfect for lazing. The climbing wall, squash, and tennis courts will appeal to more active visitors.

In the south, the **American Golf School** offers a team of golf pros who are adept at coaching children, beginners, and also experts through their eight different courses and private lessons. Their summer schools and master classes are highly sought after.

The **Hotel de Mougins**, with a lovely address on the "avenue du Golf," is situated close to ten prestigious golf courses, including the Golf Country Club Cannes, the Royal Mougins Golf Club, and the Golf d'Opio-Valbonne. The hotel can arrange rounds at the different clubs, and offers packages which include extras, such as lunch in the clubhouse.

The **Golf Hotel Grenoble Charmeil** can organize green fees for three courses, including the Grenoble International course. In Brittany, the **St-Malo Golf and Country Club** has a 19th-century manor house interior and an impressive 27-hole golf course, surrounded by the Mesnil forest.

TENNIS

Tennis is a very popular sport in France, and courts for hourly rental can be found in almost every town. It is a good idea to bring your own equipment, since rental facilities may not be available.

HIKING

In France, more than 38,000 miles (60,000 km) of long-distance tracks, known as *Grandes Randonnées* (GR), are clearly marked. There are also 50,000 miles (80,000 km) of the shorter *Petites Randonnées* (PR).

The routes vary in difficulty and include long pilgrim routes, alpine crossings, and tracks through national parks. Some *Grandes* and *Petites Randonnées* are open for mountain biking as well as horse riding.

Topo Guides, published by **Féderation Française de la Randonnée Pédestre**, describe the tracks, providing details of transportation, places for overnight stops, and food stores. A series geared specifically toward families is *Promenades et Randonnées.*

BICYCLING

For advice on bicycling in France, contact the British **CTC** (Cyclists' Touring Club) or the **Fédération Française de Cyclisme**.

Mountain biking - a great way to explore

Escaping into the forest at Fontainebleau *(see pp180–1)*

Serious bicyclists could live their dream by joining up for a Tour de France stage vacation with the **Velo Echappe** *Etape du Tour* team. The company organizes two types of adventure – a fully guided program or a self-guided option. They handle all the registration forms and paperwork for participants, and on the guided option they will put you up in a hotel a block away from the end of the stage. Preparation for this kind of adventure doesn't just involve getting into training; applications to the tour company must be received by the end March every year to have a chance to ride along with the Tour de France professionals.

At the other end of the scale, people who enjoy a gentle bike ride could opt for a wine bicycling tour through the vineyards of France. Freewheeling down the Route des Grands Crus in Burgundy may be more than enough vacation exercise for some.

Duvine Adventures organize tours that take in famed vineyards such as La Tache, Romanée-Conti, and Nuit-St-Georges. The riding includes flat spells and hills, and the rest and relaxation involves excellent lunches.

Local tourist offices provide details about riding facilities in their area. *Gîtes de France (see p549)* offer dormitory accommodations in the vicinity of well-known tracks.

HORSE RIDING

There are many reputable companies that offer riding breaks from one-hour treks to long weekends or vacations of a week or more. The best way to choose is to decide which type of countryside you would prefer to see from the saddle. If the Mont St-Michel (*see pp256–61*) and the beaches of Brittany appeal, then **A La Carte Sportive** offer stables with horses trained in trekking, for beginners and intermediates. For more experienced riders, riding a Camargue mount through the countryside of Provence (*see pp510–11*) is a wonderful treat. **Ride in France** organizes rides through beautiful scenery, vineyards, and picturesque villages, allowing riders to experience the flora and fauna of the area. Horse lovers with a taste for the historical, or those hankering after a little luxury, could do worse than to sign up for a break with the **Cheval et Chateaux** company which organizes horse-riding tours around chateaus in the Loire. Not only do riders get to take in the majesty of the chateaus of the region, the overnight accommodations also comes courtesy of a castle. It makes an ideal way to play lord or lady of the manor while indulging in a passion for trekking.

Hiking along the Gorges du Verdon in Provence *(see pp514–15)*

MOUNTAIN SPORTS

The French mountains, especially the Alps and the Pyrenees, provide a wide range of sporting opportunities. In addition to winter downhill skiing and *ski de fond* (cross-country), the mountains are enjoyed in the summer by rock-climbers and mountaineers, and by those skiers who can't wait for winter and so indulge in some of Europe's best glacier skiing.

Climbers should contact the **Féderation Française de la Montagne et de l'Escalade** for more information on the best climbing locations and other useful tips.

Winter sports fans should join the serious skiers and snowboarders who head to the French hills in droves every season. The mountains here have terrain to satisfy all levels of expertise from toddlers in the kids' club through to death-defying off-piste athletes, adrenalin junkie snowboarders, kite-surfers and middle-of-the-road snow fans who are happiest cruising blue runs and eating in slope-side restaurants.

SKIING

Undoubtedly, France has some of the best ski resorts anywhere in the world. The sheer scale of some of the larger areas can be quite daunting if you're on a week-long trip – especially to those who insist on covering all the trails on the map. The Trois Vallées ski area (*see p322*), for example, is made up of three valleys which include the resorts of Courchevel, Méribel, Val Thorens, and Les Ménuires. Added together, they comprise a staggering 375 miles (600 km) worth of pistes.

The Trois Vallées is an excellent example of how French ski resorts differ wildly in style. Super-chic stations such as Courchevel and Méribel draw skiers from around the world, often dressed in cutting-edge ski fashion and using the latest hi-tech equipment. In these resorts the hotels – especially those dubbed to be "in" – are expensive, and eating and drinking in the "see and be seen spots" here puts a significant dent in the most generous of vacation budgets. On the other hand, resorts which are considered less glamorous, such as Vals Thorens and Les Menuires, can be enjoyed without designer labels and huge credit card limits.

The main consideration when choosing a resort should be the percentage of terrain to suit your ability. For example, a beginner might be miserable in a resort aimed at experts and offering only a few green runs. Similarly, a confident intermediate looking to improve will be frustrated by a ski area full of easy cruising slopes over-run with beginners.

It is also important to think about whether or not it matters to you if the village is picturesque. Die-hard ski fans can overlook ugly concrete architecture in towns such as Flaine, while those looking for the bigger picture would be best off heading to somewhere pretty, such as La Clusaz or Megève (*see p322*).

The proximity of accommodations to piste is also very important; most people find it is worth paying a premium for accommodations near the slopes and lifts, rather than having to stagger back in heavy boots carrying your skis after a long day's schussing.

Aside from obvious concerns such as nightlife, children's crèches, and the efficiency of lift networks, it can also be useful to look at historic snow reports for the last few years for the time you are planning your trip. The weather can be unpredictable though so be sure to also check the resorts' snow-making capabilities. Armed with these details you should be in a good position to pick the right resort for you but remember, while the Alps get most of the attention, the Pyrenees can offer some seriously good skiing, too.

AERONAUTICAL SPORTS

Learning to fly in France can be relatively inexpensive. Information on the different flying schools is available from the **Fédération Nationale Aéronautique**. There are also plenty of opportunities to learn the exhilarating skills of gliding, paragliding, and hang gliding. For more information, contact the **Fédération Française de Vol Libre**.

If piloting a plane is a little too much, you can opt for ballooning instead. France has an illustrious ballooning history, being the birthplace of the Montgolfier brothers who pioneered the art in 1783. **Aeroparis** provide a tethered taste of adventure in Paris with a trip into the air in the **Parc André-Citroën**, but floating unfettered over the countryside can be arranged by several companies around the country. **France Balloons** can organize trips over Fontainebleau (*see pp180–1*) outside Paris or over the Burgundian vineyards. Alternatively, they offer the opportunity to apppreciate the spectacular chateaus of the Loire from a balloon. In Provence **Hot Air Balloon Provence** can float you over the picturesque villages, cornfields and vines of the Lubéron (*see pp506–7*).

WATER SPORTS

Whitewater rafting, kayaking, and canoeing all take place on many French rivers, especially in the Massif Central. More information on these sports and the best places to take part can be obtained from the **Fédération Française de Canoë-Kayak**.

The Atlantic coast around Biarritz (*see p452*) offers some of the best surfing and windsurfing in Europe. Excellent windsurfing can also be found in Brittany, with **Wissant** in particular being a big draw. A charming small fishing village, Wissant is considered a decent stop on any windsurf tour.

Surfers who prefer to do it without the sail head to **Hossegor** outside Biarritz (*see* *p452*) for fantastic waves. The surfing here is world-class and perhaps not ideal for beginners, but the after-surf scene is great fun for anyone who is more interested in lying on the beach or paddling at the shore than carving up the water.

Similarly the town of **Lacanau** (*see p424*) plays host to international surf competitions, drawing wave fans from all over the world.

Sailing and waterskiing are also very popular in France. Contact the **Fédération Française de Voile** for more details. Training schools and equipment rental are found at places along the coast and on lakes.

If cruising on a boat is your kind of thing, there are many outlets that can help. One of the swankier options is to take a **Sunsail** bareboat tour around the Côte d'Azur, although this option is only available to those who have reached a certain level of boatmanship. The company also offers a range of skippered tours around the beautiful coastline.

Swimming facilities throughout the country are generally good, although beaches in the South of France can become very crowded in high season *(see pp474–5)*.

HUNTING & FISHING

Although hunting is a popular sport in France, a *permis de chasse* is required, for which there is a fee. You will need a copy of your own national hunting licence and to pass an exam in French, which makes it difficult for visitors. There are regional variations on the season, depending on the type of hunting. Since the hunting ban came into force in England, many French hunts have found English hunters a welcome boost to their numbers.

All kinds of fishing, for both fresh and seawater fish, are available, depending on the individual area. Local fishing stores sell the *carte de pêche*, which gives details of regulations.

NATURISM

There are nearly 90 naturism centers in France. These are mostly located in the south and southwest of the country, as well as in Corsica. Information in English can be obtained from French Government Tourist Offices (*see p669*), or from the **Fédération Française de Naturisme**.

PUBLIC EVENTS

To join the French as they enjoy their spare time, look out for local soccer and rugby games, bike races, or other sporting events suited to spectators.

Special seasonal markets and local *fêtes* often combine antiques fairs and *boules* tournaments with rock and pop concerts, making an enjoyable day out.

SPA VACATIONS

France is renowned for its sea-water based thalassotherapy spa techniques, with many centers, salons, and hotels offering "thalasso" treatments. The seaside towns and resorts seem to be the most logical place to head for ocean-based treatments, and not surprisingly there are some excellent spots dotted around the coastline.

Chic seaside town Deauville (*see p255*) plays host to upscale spa seekers in the **Algotherm Thalassotherapy Spa**. Similarly the **Sofitel Thalassa** in Quiberon (*see p278*) offers top-class water therapy. More water therapy can be found near the springs at Vichy (*see pp358–9*) at the **Sofitel Les Celestins** spa and at the **Evian Royal Resort** (*see p391*).

Wine in France is considered to be almost as important as water, so it is not surprising that a spa specializing in "vinotherapy" or wine therapy has hordes of loyal fans. Head to **Les Sources de Caudalie** spa among the vines near Bordeaux and indulge in a vinosource grape facial and cabernet scrub.

If big name treatments are your thing, you should head to **Le Mas Candille** which hosts the first Shiseido spa in continental Europe. The products used are as exceptional as one would expect from such a swanky brand, and the techniques are Oriental-based.

Finally, if a thoroughly indulgent approach to a spa session is your idea of vacation heaven, then splurge at the new **Four Seasons Terre Blanche** in Provence. The half-day retreat of total indulgence involves a salt and oil scrub, an aromatherapy massage, an acupressure facial, and an Oriental head massage. If you want to go *à la carte*, you can choose from a wide range of delights such as an eye-lifting facial, a body-toning massage, or an Oshadi clay wrap.

If you can't escape from the city, the **Caudalie** spa at the Hotel Meurice and the **Four Seasons** spa at the George V can provide the ultimate escape and spa break right in the center of Paris.

YOGA

The beautiful countryside in France provides the perfect backdrop for a restorative yoga retreat vacation. The **Manolaya Yoga Centre** offers relaxing and fun hatha yoga vacations throughout Provence and its Avignon-based center. For the more dynamic style of ashtanga yoga, try **The Shala** retreats held in the beautiful foothills of the Cevennes.

Another excellent option is a break at the **Domaine de la Grausse** in the foothills of the Pyrenees, where walking and visiting local waterfalls, chateaus, medieval villages, and even taking in some cave paintings are all on the agenda. Those with any energy left over can take advantage of options to go mountain biking, riding, playing golf, and fishing.

Beginners and experienced yoga fans alike are welcome at the **Europe Yoga Centre**, which specializes in hatha and also astanga yoga. Both individual retreats and group vacations can be arranged at the center.

GOURMET

For gourmets looking to learn how to recreate some of the stunning meals enjoyed in French restaurants, or wine buffs seeking to increase their knowledge and cellar at the same time, there are many excellent options. The sheer number of cooking classes available throughout the country may seem overwhelming, so the first step in choosing an activity vacation of this kind is to consider your initial skill level and what you wish to achieve from the break. From die-hard kitchen disasters to budding restaurateurs, there is a gourmet break in France that will suit.

Two options for beginner chefs are the "cookery holiday" from **Cook in France** which emphasizes fun rather than serious hard work in the kitchen and Rosa Jackson's cooking school, **Les Petits Farcis**, in Nice (*see pp526–7*) where she guides food-lovers around the town's glorious fresh produce stalls explaining how to spot the best melon, or how to cook the intimidating artichoke. The Cook in France team offers many specialized courses (such as matching wine to food) alongside their standard culinary classes, while Rosa Jackson's cooking school offers the opportunity to rustle up a menu depending on what looks great in the market that particular day.

Budding culinary stars might want to head to Provence to learn from the master's pupils with the lessons at **La Bastide de Moustiers**, Alain Ducasse's provencal inn in Moustiers-Sainte-Marie (*see pp514–15*). The lessons take place in the hotel's kitchen from November to March, with the chef and his team of former Ducasse pupils. The lessons focus on Provençal cooking with an emphasis on local produce from the garden and village markets.

Oenophiles, on the other hand, might like to join with the **French Wine Explorers** who offer tours around vineyards. Alternatively, arranging wine classes via the French tourist office can be an excellent idea. **Wine Travel Guides** has an informative website for independent travelers, listing vineyards that are recommended by regional wine experts.

ARTS AND CRAFTS

France is a top choice for creative people looking to get away from it all and to express themselves in beautiful surroundings. Whether your preferred method of expression is scribbling in a notebook by yourself on the banks of a river, or perfecting your pastel technique in an art master class, there is an outlet for you somewhere in France.

Mas Saurine offers residential and non-residential painting vacations in the Pyrenees, 30 minutes from Perpignan. Small group classes, geared to different levels of ability, are taught in an old stone barn by exhibiting artists.

Courses in stone and bronze sculpture are on offer in Normandy, near Honfleur, with experienced sculptor **Sally Hersh**. Some of the artist's pieces are also available for purchase.

Those with a passion for seeing life through a lens are well catered for with photography courses in **Les Vignes** in Noailles, just an hour's drive from Toulouse. Here, photography courses suitable for all ages and abilities are offered.

DIRECTORY

SPECIALIST VACATIONS

French Institute
17 Queensberry Place,
London SW7 2DT
United Kingdom.
Tel *020 7073 1350.*
www.institut-français.org.uk

Union REMPART
1 rue des Guillemites,
75004 Paris.
Tel *01 42 71 96 55.*
www.rempart.com

GOLF

American Golf School
Av du Château 64210
Bidart. **Tel** *05 59 43 81 21*
www.americangolfschool.com

Fédération Française de Golf
68 rue Anatole France,
92300 Levallois Perret.
Tel *01 41 49 77 00.*
www.ffgolf.org

Golf Hotel Grenoble Charmeil
38210 Saint Quentin sur Isère.
Tel *04 76 93 67 28* **www**.golfhotelgrenoble.com

Hotel de Mougins
205 av du Golf 06250
Mougins.
Tel *04 92 92 17 07.*
www.hotel-de-mougins.com

Hotel Royal and Evian Masters
South Shore Lake Geneva
74500 Evian. **Tel** *04 50 26 85 00* **www**.evianroyalresort.com

St-Malo Golf and Country Club
Domaine de St-Yvieux
35540 Le Tronchet.
Tel *02 99 58 98 99.*
www.saintmalogolf.com

HIKING

Fédération Française de Randonnée Pédestre
64 rue du Dessous des
Berges, 75013 Paris.
Tel *01 44 89 93 90.*
www.ffrandonnee.fr

BICYCLING

CTC
Parklands, Railton Rd,
Guildford, Surrey GU2
9JX United Kingdom.
Tel *0870 873 0060.*
www.ctc.org.uk

Duvine Adventures
www.duvine.com

Fédération Française de Cyclisme
5 rue de Rome, 93561
Rosny-sous-Bois.
Tel *01 49 35 69 00.*
www.ffc.fr

Velo Echappe
www.veloechappe.com

HORSE RIDING

A La Carte Sportive
www.carte-sportive.com.iowners.net
Tel *02 33 48 52 36.*

Cheval et Châteaux
www.cheval-et-chateaux.com

Ride in France
www.rideinfrance.com

DIRECTORY

MOUNTAIN SPORTS

Féderation Française de la Montagne et de l'Escalade
8–10 quai de la Marne,
75019 Paris.
Tel *01 40 18 75 50.*
www.ffme.fr

SKIING

For information on the different resorts, visit the following websites:

www.flaine.com
www.laclusaz.com
www.megeve.com
www.les3vallees.com
www.courchevel.com
www.meribel.net
www.valthorens.com
www.lesmenuires.com

AERONAUTICAL SPORTS

Aeroparis
Parc André-Citroën
75015 Paris.
Tel *01 44 26 20 00.*
www.aeroparis.com

France Balloons
Tel *08 10 60 01 53.*
www.franceballoons.com

Fédération Française de Vol Libre
4 rue de Suisse,
06000 Nice.
Tel *04 97 03 82 82.*
www.federation.ffvl.fr

Fédération Nationale Aéronautique
155 av Wagram,
75017 Paris.
Tel *01 44 29 92 00.*
www.ff-aero.fr

Hot Air Balloon Provence
www.montgolfiere-provence-ballooning.com

WATER SPORTS

Fédération Française de Canoë-Kayak
87 quai de la Marne,
94340 Joinville-le-Pont.
Tel *01 45 11 08 50.*
www.ffcanoe.asso.fr

Fédération Française de Voile
17 rue Henri Bocquillon,
75015 Paris.
Tel *01 40 60 37 00.*
www.ffvoile.net

Hossegor Tourist Office
Pl des Halles – B.P. 6
40150 Hossegor.
Tel *05 58 41 79 00.*
www.hossegor.fr

Lacanau Tourist Office
Pl de l'Europe
33680 Lacanau.
Tel *05 56 03 21 01.*
www.lacanau.com

Sunsail
www.sunsail.com

Wissant Tourist Office
Pl de la Mairie
62179 Wissant.
Tel *08 20 20 76 00.*
www.ville-wissant.fr

NATURISM

Fédération Française de Naturisme
www.ffn-naturisme.com

SPA VACATIONS

Algotherm
10 rue Alexander Fleming
14200 Herouville-Saint-Clair.
Tel *02 31 06 16 26.*
www.algotherm.fr

Evian Royal Resort
Rive Sud du Lac de Génève
74501 Evian-les-Bains.
Tel *04 50 26 85 00.*
www.evianroyalresort.com

Four Seasons Provence
Domaine de Terre Blanche 83440 Tourrettes Var.
Tel *04 94 39 90 00.*
www.fourseasons.com

Hotel Four Seasons George V
31 av George V,
75008 Paris.
Tel *01 49 52 70 00.*
www.fourseasons.com

Hotel Meurice
228 rue de Rivoli
75001 Paris.
Tel *01 44 58 10 10.*
www.meuricehotel.com

Le Mas Candille
Bd Clément Rebuffel
06250.
Tel *04 92 28 43 43.*
www.lemascandille.com

Sofitel Les Celestins Vichy
111 bd des Etats-Unis
03200 Vichy.
Tel *04 70 30 82 00.*
www.sofitel.com

Sofitel Thalassa Quiberon
Pointe de Goulvars
BP 10802 Quiberon Cedex
56178 Quiberon.
Tel *02 97 50 20 00.*
www.accorthalassa.com

Les Sources de Caudalie
Chemin de Smith Haut Lafitte
33650 Bordeaux–Martillac.
Tel *05 57 83 83 83.*
www.sources–caudalie.com

YOGA

Domaine de la Grausse
09420 Clermont la Grausse, Ariège.
Tel *05 61 66 30 53.*
www.yoga-in-france.com

Europe Yoga Centre
46800 St Matre
Lot.
Tel *05 65 21 76 20.*
www.europeyoga.com

Manolaya Yoga Centre
FFPY 39 rue de la Bonneterie, 84000 Avignon.
Tel *06 13 80 75 64.*
www.manolaya.org

The Shala
Les Pauses, St André de Majencoules,
Gard 30570.
www.theshala.co.uk

GOURMET

La Bastide de Moustiers
Chemin de Quinson
04360 Moustiers-Sainte-Marie.
Tel *04 92 70 47 47.*
www.bastide-moustiers.com

Cook in France
Tel *05 53 30 24 05.*
www.cookinfrance.com

French Wine Explorers
www.wine-tours-france.com

Les Petits Farcis
7 rue du Jésus
06300 Nice.
Tel *06 81 67 41 22.*
www.petitsfarcis.com

Wine Travel Guides
www.winetravelguides.com

ARTS AND CRAFTS

Mas Saurine
Comi de l'Estrada 66320 Joch.
Tel *04 68 05 85 66.*
www.mas-saurine.net

Les Vignes
Le Bourg
81170 Noailles.
Tel *05 63 40 59 22.*
www.photohols.com

Sally Hersh
Tel *01798 861 2480 (UK).*
www.sallyhersh.com

Mobil

SURVIVAL GUIDE

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TRAVEL INFORMATION 678–689

PRACTICAL INFORMATION

France is justifiably proud of its many attractions, for which it has excellent tourist information facilities. Both in France and abroad, French government tourist offices are an invaluable source of reference for practical aspects of your stay. Most towns and large villages have a tourist information office; the relevant address, telephone number, and website (if available) are provided for each town and area listed in this guide. Domestic tourism in France creates peak vacation migration periods, especially between July 14 and August 31. Consequently, the hotel and restaurant trades are seasonal. A little forward planning will allow you to avoid the pitfalls of seasonal closure.

FNOTSI

Tourist information logo

VISAS AND PASSPORTS

Citizens of EU countries, apart from the UK and Ireland, can enter France with a national identity card. Visitors from the UK, Ireland, the US, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand need a full passport. Tourist trips may last up to three months, after this a *carte de séjour* (residency permit) is required. Like most EU countries (but not the UK and Ireland) France is part of the Schengen agreement for shared border controls. If you enter the Schengen area through a member country, you are free to cross into all member countries within your 90-day stay.

Non-EU nationals who wish to work or study in France, or stay longer than three months, should obtain a visa from a French consulate in their home country. For more information, check the website of your French embassy and your own country's state department.

CUSTOMS INFORMATION

EU residents are allowed to carry any amount of goods between EU countries without paying customs duties, as long as the goods are for personal use. Among the limits generally accepted as being for personal use are 800 cigarettes, 90 liters of wine, and 110 liters of beer.

Visitors from outside the EU can reclaim sales tax *(TVA)* on many French goods if more than €175 is spent in one store in one day. To claim the tax back you must get a *détaxe* form from the store and take your goods out of the EU within three months. Present the receipt at customs when leaving the country, and mail the stamped receipt as instructed. The refund will then be sent to you or credited to your bank card. There are *détaxe* desks at all main airports and in big stores. Full information is available from **Direction Générale des Douanes**.

OFFICE de
TOURISME

Office de Tourisme in the Vence region of France

TOURIST INFORMATION

All cities, towns, and many villages have *offices de tourisme*, which provide invaluable free maps and information on local attractions and accommodations. Tourist offices often produce useful guides covering walking and bike routes, bike rental, local gastronomy, traditional farm produce, and more. Some regional and *département* offices also offer well-priced hotel and tour packages, and many city offices have organized imaginative guided tours and themed routes.

Before traveling to France, you can get basic orientation information and advice from France's official tourist website **FranceGuide** or from the French government tourist office (usually called Maison de la France) in your country. For in-depth regional planning it is best to use the websites of the relevant Regional Tourist Boards *(Comité Régional du Tourisme)* or those of the many *départements (Comités Départementaux du Tourisme)*. The latter provide a valuable range of detailed information. Nearly all websites are available in English. Links to these sites can be found on the FranceGuide website.

ADMISSION CHARGES

Most museums and monuments in France charge an entrance fee, usually from €2 to around €10. There is often free admission for under 18s, and there are generally discounts for those aged 18–25, and families.

Several multi-entry discount plans are available that reduce costs if you plan to visit a number of sights. Foremost is the Paris Museum Pass, which gives unlimited entry to over 60 museums and monuments in and around Paris, for either two, four, or six days. It can be bought in advance online (www.parismuseumpass.com). Other cities and regions have local plans, which often include unlimited use of local transportation as well. Check local tourism websites to see what is available.

Colonne de la
Grande Armée

Sign to monument of cultural importance

◁ **Menton, Côte d'Azur with backdrop of the Alps**

The Arc de Triomphe du Carrousel and the Musée du Louvre in Paris

OPENING HOURS

This guide lists which days of the week sights are open. National museums and sights normally close on Tuesdays, with a few exceptions that close on Mondays. Generally, the larger museums and sights are open from 9 or 10am–6pm, sometimes with one late evening a week, often Thursday. Note that smaller museums and churches may close from 12:30–2pm.

Opening times can also vary considerably by season, especially for country châteaux, estates, and gardens. Many are open daily in the peak July to August vacation season and then close completely from November to March, or are only open on weekends. Most sights are closed on Christmas and New Year's day.

See page 652 for details on opening hours for stores; page 674 for banks; and pages 596–7 for restaurants.

TAXES AND TIPPING

A service charge of 12.5 to 15 percent is included on all restaurant checks and it is customary to round up the check by a few euros in a restaurant, or a few cents in a café, especially if the service has been good. In grander restaurants, an extra tip of 5–10 percent is the norm.

For taxi drivers, the usual tipping rate is around 10 percent. For hotel porters, it is common to tip around 75 cents to one euro.

TRAVELERS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

France is working hard to improve access to all its services. There are disabled parking spaces in many streets and all public parking lots. These can be used free of charge with a European Blue Badge. SNCF (French railways) has introduced the *Accès Plus* plan, through which wheelchair users and others with mobility problems can reserve ahead to guarantee a space and free assistance. For information go to the "Everyday Life" section on the SNCF website and look under *Services + (see p682)*.

In Paris, some buses, some RER lines, and one Métro line (no. 14) are wheelchair accessible *(see pp688–9)*. By law, all taxis must carry wheelchair users for no extra charge *(see p688)*.

Much has been done to improve access to attractions, but work is still in progress and access to smaller historic houses and country châteaux can be difficult at times. The blue *Tourisme & Handicap* label indicates attractions, hotels, restaurants, and other facilities that meet full disabled access criteria. Many hotels and *chambres-d'hôtes* (bed and breakfasts) have adapted rooms, and major reservation agencies such as *Logis de France* or *Gîtes de France* indicate this on their websites.

For information on disabled facilities in France, the best resource is the **Association des Paralysés de France** *(APF)*, which produces an annual *Guide Vacances* vacation booklet. The **Infomobi** website also has comprehensive information on transportation services for the disabled in and around Paris. Both these resources are in French only. Further information in English can be found on the FranceGuide website.

TRAVELING WITH CHILDREN

Families traveling in France benefit from a range of cost-cutting discounts including reduced or free admission to attractions for children. Children under 4 travel free on most public transportation and children aged 4 to 11 (4 to 9, in Paris) travel half price.

Some of the big French hotel chains (notably Novotel) specialize in catering for families, while many small country hotels and *chambres-d'hôtes* have cost-efficient family rooms *(chambres familiales)*. If you base yourself in one area for two days or more, a self-contained *gîte*, with several rooms and a kitchen, can offer exceptional value for money *(see pp548–9)*.

Virtually all French restaurants welcome children, and many have a children's menu *(menu d'enfants)* for €5–€8.

The FranceGuide website has information on attractions throughout France, while local tourism websites list regional-specific family attractions and activities. For more ideas, consult websites such as **France for Families** and **Kids in Tow**.

The Château de Versailles has excellent disabled access

SENIOR TRAVELERS

Senior visitors to France do not enjoy reduced admission fees at national museums and monuments although some privately-owned châteaux and attractions do offer lower prices for older people. Discounted travel on public transportation is only available with multi-journey passes issued by some cities, and the SNCF *Carte Senior* for the over 60s *(see p682)*. However, these cards are not much use for short visits since you'll only notice the discount if you make several journeys on each system. Railpasses (see p682) bought in advance outside France can be better value.

STUDENT INFORMATION

Students aged under 26 with a valid **International Student Identity Card** (ISIC) benefit from many discounts, as well as those available to everyone in France aged 25 or under. The Centre d'Information et de Documentation Jeunesse will provide you with further information (www.cidj.com).

GAY AND LESBIAN TRAVELERS

France has prominent gay and lesbian communities that are becoming ever more part of the cultural mainstream. The Marais district of Paris is the country's foremost "gay village," but there are gay clubs and services all over the capital. There are gay communities in many other cities, especially in Toulouse, Nantes, Montpellier, and Nice. FranceGuide, France's official tourist website, has a dedicated section for gay travelers with links to a wide range of gay-friendly information and travel services, including hotel bookings and apartment rentals.

TRAVELING ON A BUDGET

How much you spend on a vacation in France will vary enormously depending on what you do. However, in general, two people staying at a basic hotel (an average of €60 for a double room), eating both lunch and dinner in restaurants, visiting a few attractions, and using public transportation can expect to spend roughly €160 per day in most parts of France (€80 each).

Staying in Paris, the Cóte d'Azur, and other fashionable resorts is expensive but less-visited rural regions such as Normandy, inland Brittany, and Lorraine can be more affordable. Traveling in peak season (July–mid-September) will also be costly with high hotel rates, particularly in the most popular regions. December and March, the winter sports season, can also be pricey, particularly in the Alps. If you want to keep costs down it is best to travel during the low season when hotel prices are much cheaper. City hotels, however, can be more reasonable between July and August when most French people head for the country.

City Pass
18
30
45
Lille Métropole
2420

A one, two or three day Lille City Pass

Staying in a *chambre-d'hôtes* (bed and breakfast) is a good alternative to costly hotels. Traditionally, these are located in the countryside but they are now popping up in towns and the average price for a comfortable double room is around €40 including breakfast. Another option is a *gîte*, which offers cooking facilities, though these usually require a minimum stay of a weekend or a week.

When dining, opt for a set menu – ordering from the à la carte menu will be far more

Waiting to travel at Marseille Gare St-Charles train station

expensive. Eating your main meal at lunchtime rather than in the evening will mean you can make the most of the best-value set menus or *formules*. To keep costs down when sightseeing, opt for a City Pass that gives unlimited travel on local transportation as well as entry to local monuments *(see p689)*. If you intend to rent a car, reserve it ahead through an Internet rental agency to get the best rates.

FRENCH TIME

France is one hour ahead of Greenwich Mean Time (GMT) in both winter and summer.

ELECTRICAL ADAPTORS

The voltage in France is 220 volts. Plugs are the standard type used in most of Europe with two round pins, or three for applications that need to be earthed. Many hotels offer built-in adaptors for shavers.

Lining up for the Eiffel Tower

CONVERSION CHART

Imperial to metric
1 inch = 2.54 centimeters
1 foot = 30 centimeters
1 mile = 1.6 kilometers
1 ounce = 28 grams
1 pound = 454 grams
1 pint = 0.6 liter
1 gallon = 4.6 liters

Metric to imperial
1 millimeter = 0.04 inch
1 centimeter = 0.4 inch
1 meter = 3 feet 3 inches
1 kilometer = 0.6 mile
1 gram = 0.04 ounce
1 kilogram = 2.2 pounds
1 liter = 1.8 pints

RESPONSIBLE TRAVEL

In France, as in many other countries, there has been a rapid growth in environmental awareness. **Echoway** is one of the leading French ecotourism organizations, encouraging heightened awareness of responsible travel. **Mountain Riders** promotes sustainable winter tourism in the Alps, providing information on how to get to the mountains by public transportation and arranging group walks to clean up mountain pistes each spring.

France has a long-running rural tourism network, with farmhouse accommodations available through the central Gîtes de France agency *(see p549)*. There are also smaller organizations with a more defined ecological stance such as **Accueil Paysan**, a network of small-scale farmers practicing low-impact, sustainable agriculture. Another alternative to staying in a hotel is camping, and there are over 9,000 fully equipped campsites across the country *(see p548)*.

Information on local green tourism (*tourisme vert* or *eco*) initiatives and activities can be found through local tourist offices. Many towns have weekly markets selling only organic and traditional produce (usually called a *marché bio*), which allow visitors to give back to the local community. Market days have been provided throughout the guide.

DIRECTORY

EMBASSIES

Australia
4 Rue Jean Rey, 75015
Paris. **Map** 6 D3.
Tel *01 40 59 33 00.*
www.france.embassy.gov.au

Canada
35 Ave Montaigne, 75008
Paris. **Map** 6 F1.
Tel *01 44 43 29 00.*
www.amb-canada.fr

United Kingdom
35 Rue du Faubourg St-Honoré, 75383 Paris.
Map 3 C5.
Tel *01 44 51 31 00.*
http://ukinfrance.fco.gov.uk/en

United States
2 Ave Gabriel, 75008
Paris. **Map** 3 A5.
Tel *01 43 12 22 22.*
www.france.usembassy.gov

FRENCH TOURIST OFFICES

Australia
Level 13, 25 Bligh St,
Sydney NSW 2000.
Tel *(2) 9231 52 44.*
www.franceguide.com

Canada
1800 McGill College, 1010
Montréal (QC), H3A 3J6.
Tel *(1) 866 313 7262.*
www.franceguide.com

United Kingdom
Lincoln House, 300 High
Holborn, London WC1V
7JH. **Tel** *0906 824 4123.*
www.franceguide.com

United States
825 Third Ave, New York,
NY 10022.
Tel *(1) 514 288 1904.*
www.franceguide.com

Paris Convention and Visitors Bureau
25 Rue des Pyramides,
75001 Paris.
Tel *08 92 68 30 00.*
www.parisinfo.com

CUSTOMS INFORMATION

Direction Générales des Douanes
Tel *08 11 20 44 44.*
www.douane.gouv.fr

SPECIAL NEEDS

APF
www.apf.asso.fr

Infomobi
www.infomobi.com

Tourisme & Handicaps
www.tourisme-handicaps.org

FAMILIES AND STUDENTS

International Student Identity Card (ISIC)
www.isic.org
www.isiccard.com

France for Families
www.france4families.com

Kids in Tow
www.kidsintow.co.uk

RESPONSIBLE TRAVEL

Accueil Paysan
Tel *04 76 43 44 83*
www.accueil-paysan.com

Echoway
www.echoway.org

FranceGuide
www.franceguide.com

Mountain Riders
www.mountain-riders.org

Personal Security and Health

On the whole France is a safe place for visitors, but it is always a good idea to take the normal precautions of looking after your possessions and avoiding unfamiliar or unfrequented residential urban areas after dark. If you become sick during your stay, pharmacies generally offer good advice while the emergency services can be contacted for any serious medical problems. Consulates and consular departments *(see p671)* at your embassy can also provide assistance in an emergency.

French pharmacy sign

Gendarmes

POLICE

Violent crime is not a major problem in France, but as in any country it is advisable to be on your guard against petty theft, especially in cities. If you are robbed, lose any property, or are the victim of any other type of crime, report the incident as soon as possible at the nearest *commissariat de police* (police station). In an emergency, dialing 17 will also connect you to the police department, but you will still have to go to a station to make a statement. In small towns and villages, crime is reported to the *gendarmerie*, the force mainly responsible for rural policing. The *mairie* (town hall) is also a good place to go for help but this will only be open during office hours.

At all police stations you will be required to make a statement, called a *PV* or *procès verbal*, listing any lost or stolen items. You will need your passport, and, if relevant, your vehicle papers. It is important to keep a copy of your police statement for your insurance claim.

LOST AND STOLEN PROPERTY

The likelihood, and impact, of street theft can be considerably reduced by a few simple precautions. In the first instance, make sure that all possessions are covered by a comprehensive travel insurance policy before arrival. Once in France, avoid risky city neighborhoods, and beware of pickpockets, especially on the Paris Métro during rush hour (particularly just as the car doors are closing). When you sit at a sidewalk café table, always keep your bag within reach and in sight, preferably on your lap or on the table, and never leave it on the ground or hanging on the back of a chair. Keep bags zipped up and held close to you when walking along, and never leave luggage unattended at train stations or other travel centers. Keep valuables securely concealed and only carry with you as much cash as you think you will need for the day.

For lost or stolen property, it may be worth returning to the station where you reported the incident to check if the police have retrieved some of the items. In addition, all French town halls have a *Bureau d'Objets Trouvés* (lost property office), although they are often inefficient and finding items can take time. Lost property offices can also be found at larger train stations, which will be open during office hours.

If your passport is lost or stolen, notify your consulate immediately *(see p671)*. The loss of credit or debit cards should also be reported as soon as possible to your bank to avoid fraudulent use.

TRAVEL INSURANCE

All travelers in France should have a comprehensive travel insurance policy providing adequate cover for any eventuality, including potential medical and legal expenses, theft, lost luggage and other personal property, accidents, travel delays, and the option of immediate repatriation by air in the event of a major medical emergency. Winter sports are not covered by standard travel policies so if you are planning to ski or to undertake any other adventure sports in France you will need to pay an additional premium to make sure you are protected. All insurance policies should come with a 24-hour emergency number.

IN AN EMERGENCY

The phone number for all emergency services is 112, but in practice it is often quicker to call the relevant authority direct on their traditional two-digit numbers. In a medical emergency call the **Service d'Aide Médicale Urgence** (SAMU), who will send an ambulance. However, it can sometimes be faster to call

DIRECTORY

EMERGENCY NUMBERS

All Emergency Services
Tel *112.*

Ambulance (SAMU)
Tel *15.*

Fire (Sapeurs Pompiers)
Tel *18.*

Police and Gendarmerie
Tel *17.*

the **Sapeurs Pompiers** (fire service) who also offer first aid and can take you to the nearest hospital. This is particularly true in rural areas, where the fire station is likely to be much closer than the ambulance service based in town. The paramedics are called *secouristes*.

HOSPITALS AND PHARMACIES

All European Union nationals holding a European Health Insurance Card (EHIC) are entitled to use the French national health service. However, under the French system patients must pay for all treatments and then reclaim most of the cost from the health authorities. Therefore, non-French EU nationals who use health services in France will need to insure they keep the statement of costs (*fiche*) that is provided by the doctor or hospital. The statement should include stickers for any prescription drugs, which must be stuck onto the statement by the pharmacist once you have made your purchase. Around 80 percent of the cost can be claimed back by following the instructions provided with your EHIC card. This can be a time-consuming process and it can often be simpler to use private travel insurance. Non-EU nationals must have full private medical insurance while in France and pay for services in the same way, claiming their costs back in full from their insurance company.

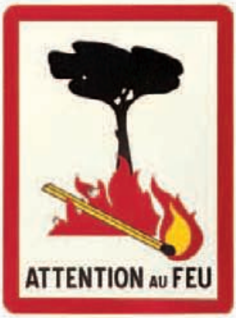
Well-equipped public hospitals can be found throughout France. In all towns and cities there are hospitals with emergency departments (called *urgences* or *service des urgences*) that can deal with immediate medical problems. If your hotel cannot direct you to one, call the SAMU or fire service. Should you require an English-speaking doctor, your consulate should be able to recommend one in the area, and in Paris and some other cities in France, there are both American and British private hospitals.

Pharmacies, identified by an illuminated green cross sign, are plentiful and easy to find. French pharmacists are highly trained and can diagnose minor health problems and suggest appropriate treatments. When one is closed, a card in the window will give details of the nearest *pharmacie de garde* that is open on Sundays or during the night.

NATURAL HAZARDS

Forest fires are a major risk in many parts of France. High winds can mean fires spread rapidly in winter as well as in summer, so be vigilant about putting out all campfires and cigarette butts. Keep well away from any area where there is a fire, since its direction can change quickly.

Before exploring any of the country's seven national parks or its regional nature parks *(parcs naturels)*, visit the relevant park information center to check the regulations and recommendations that apply within the area, and take care to observe them. When walking in mountains or sailing, inform the relevant authority – such as a park information center or a harbor-master – of your intended route and when you expect to return. Never try to walk in remote mountain areas or across tidal marshes without an experienced guide, or against local advice.



Fire hazard poster

Police car

Fire engine

Ambulance

During the hunting season (Sep–Feb and especially Sundays) dress in visible colors when out walking and avoid areas where hunters are staked out in hides *(see p663)*.

SAFETY ON BEACHES

There are many good family beaches throughout France where bathing is rarely dangerous. Many beaches are guarded in summer by lifeguards *(sauveteurs)* – always heed their instructions and only swim in supervised areas. Also look out for the system of colored flags, indicating whether it is safe to swim. Green flags mean bathing is safe; orange flags warn that bathing may be dangerous and that only the part of the beach marked out by flags is guarded. Swimming outside this area is therefore not recommended. Red flags indicate dangerous conditions (high waves, shifting sands, strong undercurrents), so all bathing is forbidden. Many beaches also display blue flags, which are used throughout the European Union as a sign of cleanliness.

Banking and Local Currency

You may bring any amount of currency into France, but anything over €7,500 (cash and checks) must be declared on arrival. The same applies when you leave. Travelers' checks are the safest way to carry money abroad, but credit or debit cards, which can be used to withdraw local currency, are by far the most convenient. Exchange bureaus are located at airports, large train stations, and in some hotels and stores, although banks usually offer the best rates of exchange.

ATM in Paris

USING BANKS

Most banks will exchange foreign currency and travelers' checks, but the commission rates vary, so it is worth looking around to make sure you get the best deal. Virtually all bank branches have ATMs (automatic teller machines), which accept major credit and debit cards. Most ATMs can give instructions in English.

Travelers' checks can be obtained from **American Express** (AmEx), **Travelex**, or your bank. American Express checks are widely accepted and no commission is charged if they are exchanged at their offices. In the case of theft, checks are replaced at once.

BANKING HOURS

In Paris, and many other cities, banks are generally open from 9 or 10am–5pm Mon–Fri, with some branches open on Saturdays. Elsewhere banks are usually closed on Mondays and generally open from 8 or 9am–12:30pm and 2–5pm Tue–Fri and 8 or 9am–12:30pm on Saturday. There are, however, many variations between banks, and individual branches. All banks close on Sundays and public holidays, and many also close at noon on the working day before the holiday.

Credit card readers require you to enter your PIN

EXCHANGE BUREAUS

Outside Paris, independent exchange bureaus are rare except in major train stations and high-density tourist areas. Privately owned exchange bureaus can have variable rates: check commission and minimum charges first.

CREDIT AND DEBIT CARDS

Major credit cards such as **Visa** or **MasterCard** and debit cards such as Switch, Maestro, or Cirrus are widely used, and are essential for most large transactions such as renting a car. Many French businesses do not accept American Express credit cards.

French credit and debit cards operate on a chip-and-PIN system so you will need to know your PIN *(code personnel)*. If you have a North American card that does not use chip-and-PIN technology, you must ask that your card be swiped.

Given the high commission rates often charged for exchanging travelers' checks, the most economical and convenient way to get local currency is just to withdraw it from an ATM with a debit card. Bear in mind, however, that ATMs may run out of bills during weekends. If an ATM is not working, you can also withdraw up to €300 per day on major credit cards at the foreign counter of a bank. The bank may need to obtain telephone authorization for such withdrawals first.

DIRECTORY

EXCHANGE BUREAUS

Travelex

Paris
125 av du Champs-Elysées,
75008.
Tel *01 47 20 25 14.*
www.travelex.com.

Lille
Gare de Lille Flandres, 5980.

Lyon
Gare de Lyon, Part-Dieu Bd Vivier Merle, 69003.

Nice
13 Avenue Thiers, 06000.

FOREIGN BANKS

American Express
11 rue Scribe, 75009 Paris.
Map 4 D5.
Tel *01 47 77 70 00.*
www.home.americanexpress.com

Barclays
24 bis av de l'Opéra,
75001 Paris.
Map 4 E5.
Tel *08 10 06 06 60.*
www.barclays.fr

HSBC
23 rue de Rivoli,
75004 Paris.
Map 3 C5.
Tel *08 10 81 58 19.*
www.hsbc.com

LOST CARDS AND TRAVELERS' CHECKS

American Express
Tel *08 00 83 28 20 (cards and checks).*

Mastercard
Tel *08 00 90 13 87.*

Visa
Tel *08 00 90 11 79.*

THE EURO

France was one of the twelve countries taking the euro (€) in 2002, with the original currency, the franc, phased out on the February 17, 2002.

EU members using the euro as sole official currency are known as the Eurozone. Several EU members have either opted out or have not met the conditions for adopting the single currency.

Euro bills are identical throughout the Eurozone countries, each one including designs of fictional monuments and architectural structures, and the 12 stars of the EU. The coins, however, have one side identical (the value side), and one side with an image unique to each country. Both bills and coins are exchangeable in any of the participating Euro countries.

Bank Bills

Euro bank bills have seven denominations. The €5 bill (gray in color) is the smallest, followed by the €10 bill (pink), €20 bill (blue), €50 bill (orange), €100 bill (green), €200 bill (yellow), and €500 bill (purple). All bills show the stars of the European Union.

€5 bill

€10 bill

€20 bill

€50 bill

€100 bill

€200 bill

€500 bill

€2 coin

€1 coin

50 cents

20 cents

10 cents

Coins

The euro has eight coin denominations: €1 and €2; 50 cents, 20 cents, 10 cents, 5 cents, 2 cents, and 1 cent. The €2 and €1 coins are both silver and gold in color. The 50-, 20-, and 10-cent coins are gold. The 5-, 2-, and 1-cent coins are bronze.

5 cents

2 cents

1 cent

Communications and Media

French telecommunications are very efficient. Most landline telephones are provided by France Télécom, which also owns Orange, the international cell phone group. Public telephones can be found in most public places and usually require a phone card *(télécarte)*. Post offices *(bureaux des postes)* are identified by the blue-on-yellow La Poste sign; the postal service was previously known as PTT and this is often still indicated on road signs. Foreign-language newspapers are available in most large towns, and some TV channels and radio stations broadcast foreign-language programs.

A distinctive yellow French mailbox

LOCAL AND INTERNATIONAL PHONE CALLS

All French telephone numbers have ten digits, and you must key in all the digits even if you are in the same area. In landline numbers the first two digits indicate the region: 01 is for Paris and the Ile de France; 02, the northwest; 03, the northeast; 04, the southeast; and 05, the southwest. French cell phone numbers begin with 06, and 08 indicates a special-rate number. All 0800 numbers are toll-free. For landline numbers, cheap rates operate on evenings, weekends, and public holidays. It is best to avoid making calls from hotels since most add hefty surcharges.

To call France from abroad, dial 00 33 and omit the initial zero from the 10-digit French number. You cannot call French 08 numbers from outside the country.

To call abroad from France, dial 00 and then the country code (Australia 61, USA and Canada 1, Irish Republic 353, New Zealand 64, and UK 44).

france telecom

France Télécom public telephone

CELL PHONES

Cell phone coverage is generally good throughout France, although signals may be weak in some mountain areas. French cell phones use the European-standard 900 and 1900 MHz frequencies, so UK cell phones work if they have a roaming facility enabled. North American cell phones will only operate in France if they are tri- or quad-band. Check roaming charges with your service provider before traveling, since making and receiving calls can be expensive. Some companies offer "packages" for foreign calls.

If you expect to use your phone frequently it can be more economical to get a cheap pay-as-you-go French cell phone from one of the main local providers such as **Orange France**, **Bouygues Télécom**, or **SFR**. All three companies have stores in most towns. You can also insert a local SIM card into your own phone, but this will only work if your phone has not been blocked by your service provider.

PUBLIC TELEPHONES

Few pay phones *(cabine téléphonique)* now accept coins, so to use one you will need a phone card *(télécarte)*. Sold in *tabacs*, post offices, train stations, and some newsstands, cards are available for 50 or 120 telephone units, and are simple to use. When you enter a phone box, the phone display will say "*Decrochez,*" your signal to pick up the phone, followed by "*Introduisez votre carte,*" for you to insert your card. The display will then say "*Patientez SVP,*" followed by "*Numérotez,*" at which point you dial the number you wish to call. For local calls, one unit lasts up to six minutes. Don't forget to take your card with you when you finish the call.

Many phones also accept credit cards (with a PIN), and Travelex exchange bureaus *(see p674)* also sell an International Telephone Card that can be used in several countries and provides good value for money. There are still a few coin and token-operated pay phones left in some cafés. At some large train stations and post offices there are staffed telephone booths *(cabines)* where you pay after you have made your call. This can be a cheaper option when making long-distance calls.

INTERNET ACCESS

The Internet is widely used in France, but surprisingly, Internet cafés are much less common than in much of Europe. They are plentiful in Paris and there are usually a few in most cities and resorts, but in small towns and rural areas they can be hard to find. It is often much easier to get online if you travel with a laptop. In Paris there are free WiFi hotspots in many Métro stations, public libraries, and other locations, and similar projects are being introduced in other major cities. Many hotels and even *chambres-d'hôtes* now offer WiFi connections, but these are rarely free. Most hotels use one of several subscription services such as Orange France and **Meteor**, with which you buy a certain amount of time-credit and are then given an access code. Any time-credit remaining can be used anywhere that uses the same service.

French WiFi servers often use different frequencies to those common in the UK and North America, so you may need to manually search for the network. For more information on how to do this, see the Orange WiFi website. If you need to use a cable connection, note that the French modem socket is incompatible with US and UK plugs. Adaptors are available, but it is often cheaper and easier to buy a French modem lead.

POSTAL SERVICES

The postal service in France is fast and usually reliable. There are post offices in most towns, and there are large main offices in all cities. Postage stamps *(timbres)* can be bought at post offices individually or in a *carnet* of seven or ten, although the most convenient place to buy stamps is often at a *tabac*, where phonecards can also be purchased.

Post offices usually open from 9am–5pm Mon–Fri, often with a break for lunch, and 9am–noon on Saturdays. Post offices in towns and cities are best avoided when they first open since this is when they are at their busiest.

Letters are mailed in yellow mailboxes that often have separate slots for mail within the town you are in, within the *département*, and for other destinations *(autres destinations)*. There are eight different price zones for international mail. Information on all mail services is provided on the **La Poste** website.

NEWSPAPERS AND MAGAZINES

Newspapers and magazines can be bought at newspaper stores *(maisons de la presse)* or newsstands *(kiosques)*. Regional newspapers tend to be more popular than the Paris-based national papers, such as the conservative *Le Figaro*, weighty *Le Monde*, or leftist *Libération*. The daily *International Herald Tribune* can be found throughout France. Other foreign papers are also often available on the day of publication in resorts and large cities.

The weekly listings magazines *Pariscope* (Thursday) and *L'Officiel des Spectacles* (Wednesday) give the latest on entertainment news in Paris. *Les Inrockuptibles* magazine has information on current music, movies, and the other arts from all over France. Many smaller cities have their own listings magazines, usually in French and often free, which can generally be found at tourist offices.

TV AND RADIO

The major nationwide TV channels in France are *TF1* and *France 2*. *Canal Plus* (or *Canal* +) is a popular subscription only channel that offers a broad mix of programs including live sports and a good range of films in English with French subtitles. A film shown in its original language is listed as *VO (Version Originale)*; a film dubbed into French is indicated as *VF (Version Française)*. Most hotels subscribe to *Canal* + and many also have cable and satellite TV, which usually includes English-language stations such as CNN, MTV, Sky, and BBC World.

It is easy to pick up UK radio stations in France, including *Radio 4* (198 long wave). *BBC World Service* broadcasts through the night, with hourly news updates on the same wavelength. *Voice of America* can be found at 90.5, 98.8, and 102.4 FM. *Radio France International* (738 AM) gives daily news in English from 3–4pm.

La Poste road sign

L'EST RÉPUBLICAIN
Le Républicain Lorrain
LE FIGARO
Comment le PS
DNA
Réforme : Pécresse maintient le cap

Newspapers sold in France

DIRECTORY

TELEPHONE AND INTERNET SERVICE

Bouygues Télécom
Tel *06 60 61 46 14.*
www.bouyguestelecom.fr

Meteor
Tel *0811 638 367.*
www.meteor-wifi.com

Orange France
Tel *0800 364 775.*
www.orange.fr
www.orange-wifi.com

SFR
Tel *1026* (from a landline phone in France). **www**.sfr.fr

POST OFFICE

La Poste
www.laposte.fr

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS AND CODES

- **Directory information**
  118 712.
- **International directory information**
  118 700.
- **France Telecom**
  0800 36 47 75.
- **Toll-free, reduced, and premium numbers**
  0800; 0810, 0820, 0825 (toll-free and reduced rate numbers); 0890, 0891, 0892 (premium rate numbers).
- **In case of emergencies**
  17.

TRAVEL INFORMATION

France enjoys sophisticated air, road, and rail travel. Direct flights from all over the world serve Paris and some regional airports. Paris is the hub of a vast internal rail network and of Europe's high-speed train network, with the Eurostar to London, Thalys to Brussels, and TGVs to Geneva and other destinations. Highways cross into all surrounding countries, including, via the Eurotunnel, the UK. France is also served by frequent Channel and Mediterranean ferries.

Getting to or from France on the national carrier, Air France

ARRIVING BY AIR

France is served by nearly all international airlines. Most long-haul flights arrive at Paris Charles de Gaulle airport, but there are flights from Europe and North Africa to many other airports around the country.

Airlines with regular flights between the UK and France include **British Airways**, **Air France**, and low-cost airlines such as **bmibaby**, **Flybe**, **Jet2**, **Ryanair**, and **easyJet**. From North America there are direct flights to Paris from about 20 cities, mainly on **Air Canada**, **American Airlines**, **Delta**, **United**, and **Continental**, and Air France. **Qantas** provides connecting flights from Australia and New Zealand.

PARIS AIRPORTS

Paris' Charles-de-Gaulle airport (CDG), about 19 miles (30 km) from the city, is the main hub airport in France. Access to central Paris is by RER line B from CDG2, which takes 40 minutes to Gare du Nord and 45 minutes to Châtelet-Les Halles. Regular bus services run from the airport to different parts of Paris, and to Disneyland Paris theme park. Air France buses run to the Arc de Triomphe and western Paris, and to Montparnasse; each journey takes about 45 minutes. RATP buses (Roissybus) depart every 20 minutes for L'Opéra and take about 50 minutes. Taxis into central Paris cost around €30–€45 and can take up to an hour.

Paris' other main airport, Orly, in the south of the city, serves mainly domestic and short-haul international flights. Shuttle buses link the airport with RER line C at Pont de Rungis and an automatic train, Orlyval, links the airport with RER line B at Antony, from where trains run to Châtelet-Les Halles in 35 minutes. Air France buses for central Paris depart every 12–20 minutes; RATP Orlybus runs to Denfert-Rochereau Métro; and the Jetbus connects Orly to Châtelet-Les Halles, departing every 15–20 minutes. Taxis take 25–45 minutes to the city center, and cost about €25.

ARRIVING BY SEA

Several regular ferry services operate between the UK and Ireland and France. Dover–Calais is the quickest route: **P&O Ferries** has up to 25 crossings daily, with a journey time of 90 minutes or less. **Seafrance** also offers several crossings a day. **Norfolkline** runs from Dover to Dunkerque in about two hours and has some of the lowest fares. Farther west, French operator **Transmanche Ferries/LD Lines** has crossings between Newhaven and Dieppe (about 4 hrs) and Portsmouth and Le Havre (8 hrs for overnight sailings), and runs a weekly service between Le Havre and Rosslare in Ireland (20 hrs). LD Lines run ferries between Dover and Boulogne (75 mins). The biggest operator in the western Channel is **Brittany Ferries**, which sails from Portsmouth to Caen (7 hrs overnight), Poole to Cherbourg (6 hrs overnight), Portsmouth to St-Malo (10 hrs overnight), Plymouth to Roscoff (8 hrs overnight), and weekly between Cork and Roscoff

Plying the Mediterranean with SNCM Ferryterranée

(14 hrs). From April/May to September/October Brittany Ferries also runs catamarans on the Poole–Cherbourg and Portsmouth–Cherbourg routes (2 hrs). **Condor Ferries** sail from Portsmouth to Cherbourg in five hours (July–Sept only) and from Poole and Weymouth to St-Malo via Jersey or Guernsey (May–Sept only).

Irish Ferries runs between Rosslare and Cherbourg (18 hrs), and to Roscoff from May to October. SNCM run ferries from a range of European ports *(see p683)*.

Eurotunnel logo

ARRIVING BY TRAIN

There are at least 20 **Eurostar** trains daily between London St. Pancras and the Gare du Nord in Paris. The journey via the Channel Tunnel takes 2 hrs 15 mins. Several trains also stop at Ebbsfleet or Ashford in Kent, Calais–Frethun, Lille (1½ hours from London), and Disneyland Paris.

Paris and its six main stations are the great hub of the French rail network. Traveling from Belgium, Holland, and north Germany, you arrive at the Gare du Nord; from other parts of Germany you come into the Gare de l'Est. Trains from Switzerland and Italy arrive at the Gare de Lyons. From Spain you come into the Gare d'Austerlitz. Outside Paris, other major rail hubs include Lille, Tours, Bordeaux, and Lyon. For more information on French rail services and traveling to France by train *see pp680-82*.

ARRIVING BY ROAD

Passengers from the UK can travel to France with their vehicle either by ferry or on the **Eurotunnel** shuttle through the Channel Tunnel. Eurotunnel runs at least four trains an hour during the day, and the trip takes about 35 minutes. Fares compete with those of the ferry companies, and similarly vary by season, day, and time of travel. For Eurotunnel crossings, it is possible to turn up and wait for the next available space.

Long-distance bus travel is a good value alternative and **Eurolines** runs three to five departures daily from Victoria Coach Station in London to Bagnolet in eastern Paris. Buses also run from London and other parts of the UK to Lyon, Marseille, and several other French towns and cities.

GREEN TRAVEL

Traveling in France without flying or driving is relatively easy thanks to the high quality of public transportation, particularly the SNCF rail network. There are daily train services from across Europe, ferries to the UK, Ireland, and Mediterranean destinations, and the Eurostar connection with London *(see pp680-85)*.

The French government has introduced an "Ecomobility" program, which aims to make it easier to transfer from trains to local buses, bicycles, or other non-car forms of transportation. This includes free-bicycle programs like the *Vélib'* now in use in Paris and other cities *(see p689)*. Many regions have also developed **Voies Vertes**, long-distance paths for biking or walking, such as the one along the Loire from Orléans to St-Nazaire.

DIRECTORY

AIRLINES

Air Canada
Tel *01 888 247 2262* (Canada), *0825 880 881* (France).
www.aircanada.com

Air France
Tel *0820 320 820* (France).
www.airfrance.com

American Airlines
Tel *01 800 433 7300* (USA), *01 55 17 43 41* (France). **www**.aa.com

British Airways
Tel *0844 493 0787* (UK), *0825 825 400* (France).
www.britishairways.com

bmibaby
www.bmibaby.com

Continental
Tel *01 800 231 0856* (USA), *01 71 23 03 35* (France).
www.continental.com

Delta
Tel *01 800 241 4141* (USA), *08 11 64 00 05* (France). **www**.delta.com

easyJet
Tel *0871 244 2366* (UK), *0826 103 320* (France).
www.easyjet.com

Flybe
www.flybe.com

Jet2
Tel *0871 226 1737* (UK), *0821 230 203* (France).
www.jet2.com

Qantas
Tel *13 13 13* in Australia, *08 11 98 00 02* in France.
www.qantas.com

Ryanair
Tel *0871 246 000* (UK), *0892 232 375* (France).
www.ryanair.com

United
Tel *01 800 864 8331*. (USA), *0810 72 72 72* (France).
www.united.com

FERRY SERVICES

Brittany Ferries
www.brittany-ferries.com

Condor Ferries
www.condorferries.com

Irish Ferries
www.irishferries.com

Norfolkline
www.norfolkline.com

P&O Ferries
www.poferries.com

Seafrance
www.seafrance.com

Transmanche Ferries/LD Lines
www.transmanche ferries.com

RAIL TRAVEL

See also *p682*

Eurostar
Tel *08705 186 186* (UK), *00 44 1233 617 575* (France).
www.eurostar.com

ROAD TRAVEL

Eurolines
Tel *0871 781 8181* (UK), *0892 899 091* (France).
www.eurolines.com

Eurotunnel
Tel *08705 35 35 35* (UK), *0810 630 304* (France).
www.eurotunnel.com

GREEN TRAVEL

Train+Bicycle Travel
www.velo.sncf.com

Voies Vertes
www.voiesvertes.com

Traveling by Train

SNCF logo

The French state railway, Société Nationale des Chemins de Fer (**SNCF**), runs Europe's most comprehensive national rail network. Its services include high-speed long-distance TGVs and mainline expresses, overnight sleepers, Motorail, and rural branch lines that reach every corner of the country. Lines closed for economic reasons are replaced by SNCF's modern buses, free to railpass holders. Travel off the main lines can be slow, though some cross-country journeys are quicker if you change trains in Paris.

TRAVELING AROUND FRANCE BY TRAIN

France has always been known for the punctuality of its trains, and has maintained a high level of investment in the state-owned rail system, SNCF. The pride of the SNCF is its TGV high-speed trains, with journey times such as Lille–Lyon or Paris–Marseille in just three hours. In addition, frequent, fast, and comfortable main-line express trains provide a comprehensive city-to-city service, while regional lines provide connections to smaller towns and villages. SNCF is also the largest bus operator in France, filling in the gaps where railroad lines have been closed.

Sleeper trains are a convenient way to travel long distances at night, and drivers can travel with their cars on **AutoTrain** or **Motorail** trains. Most (but not all) long-distance trains have restaurant cars.

Further information on French railways is provided on the main SNCF website *(see p682)* where reservations can also be made. To reserve a long-distance train from abroad, visit www.voyages-sncf.com. **Rail Europe** also offers a comprehensive information and reservation service for travel throughout Europe. For useful links and an invaluable guide to every aspect of using French and other European railways, visit **The Man in Seat 61** website.

Symbol for Paris suburban trains

LOCAL AND SCENIC RAILROADS

Alongside the national rail network there are several special railroads that operate around France. On Corsica, the **Chemins de Fer de la Corse** has narrow-gauge lines between Calvi, Bastia, and Ajaccio. Particularly spectacular is the rail trip along the north-west coast between L'Ile-Rousse and Calvi. In summer, old-style *trains touristiques* run on this and other lines. In Provence, the privately-run **Chemins de Fer de Provence** runs the *Train des Pignes* over a magnificent 90-mile (150-km) mountain route from Nice to Digne-les-Bains. SNCF also runs many more *trains touristiques* on particularly scenic sections of its regional network. These are usually in mountainous areas during the winter months and in summer on the coast and in the countryside. *Gentiane Bleu* trains run from Dijon to the winter snows in the Jura, and the *Train des Merveilles* runs from Nice into the Alps at Tende. For a guide to all these routes visit www.trainstouristiques-ter.com.

The train to Le Montenvers is a particularly scenic route

Several privately- or locally-owned rail lines around France are kept going by enthusiasts who offer excursions for part of the year, often using steam trains. The *Chemin de Fer de la Baie de la Somme* travels around the Somme Bay in Picardy and the *Chemin de Fer Touristique du Tarn* operates in the Tarn hills near Albi. Nearly all of these companies are members of the **UNECTO** association.

TYPES OF TRAIN

SNCF trains are divided into several types of train. TGV (*Train à Grande Vitesse*) trains are the flagships of the network, traveling on specially built track at around 186 mph (300 kph). There are four main TGV route networks; to the north, west, east, and south-east from Paris, with additional hubs at Lille, Lyon, Bordeaux, and Marseille. In some places, TGVs have separate stations built outside town centers. The trains have first- and second-class cars, but even second-class offers a high level of comfort. Seat reservations are obligatory for all TGV trains: tickets can be bought at stations until shortly before departure time, or reserved in advance online.

Within the TGV network there are several international services including Eurostar, linking France with the UK; Thalys, which runs between Paris and Belgium, and Holland and Germany; Lyria, serving Switzerland and Artesia, which runs a TGV service to Turin and Milan, and a conventional train from Paris to Rome. Non-TGV international trains also operate, notably the nightly Elipsos from Paris to Madrid and Barcelona.

Corail trains are conventional long-distance express trains with modern carriages; Corail Téoz trains run by day; Corail Lunéa trains are overnight with sleepers. Corail Intercités trains are slightly faster with fewer stops. Reservations are obligatory for all Corail trains and can be made through Rail Europe or SNCF.

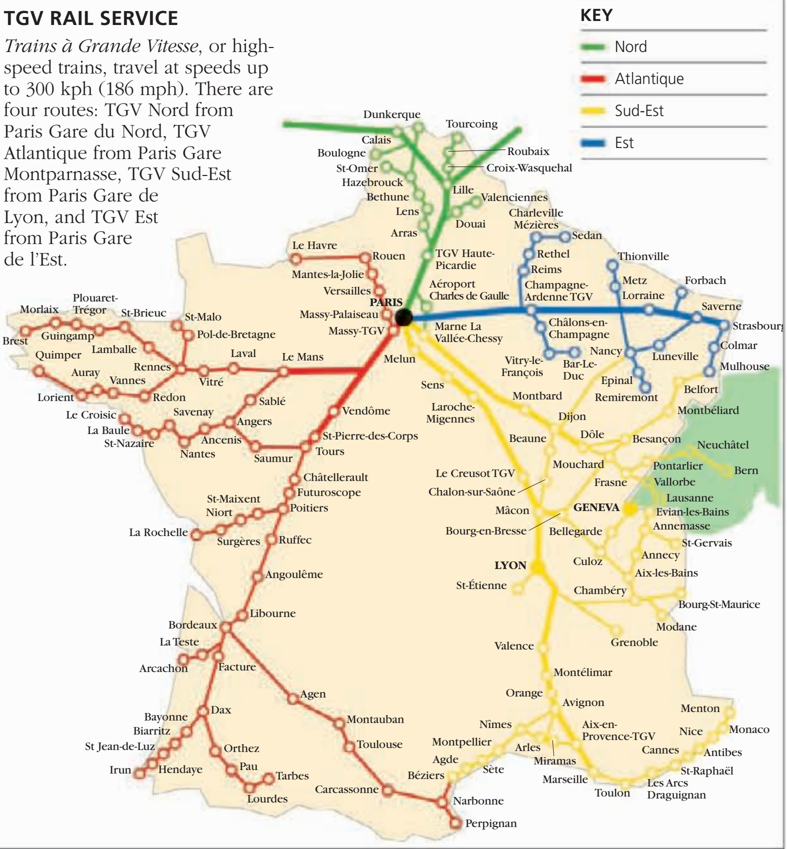
Motorail trains allow drivers to cut out long distances by traveling overnight with their car on the same train. Routes run from Calais to Nice via Avignon, and Calais to Narbonne. AutoTrains run from Paris to Nice, Narbonne and Bordeaux. Reservations are essential.

The TGV, with its distinctive-looking "nose"

TER trains are regional services that usually stop at every station. Reservations are not required and tickets can generally not be bought in advance. Route maps and information (in French only) for each region are available at stations and on the TER website *(see p682)*. Transilien is the TER network for the Ile-de-France around Paris, which is integrated with the RER suburban trains and the Métro.

TGV RAIL SERVICE

Trains à Grande Vitesse, or high-speed trains, travel at speeds up to 300 kph (186 mph). There are four routes: TGV Nord from Paris Gare du Nord, TGV Atlantique from Paris Gare Montparnasse, TGV Sud-Est from Paris Gare de Lyon, and TGV Est from Paris Gare de l'Est.


KEY
Nord
Atlantique
Sud-Est
Est
Dunkerque
Tourcoing
Calais
Boulogne
Roubaix
St-Omer
Croix-Wasquehal
Hazebrouck
Bethune
Lille
Valenciennes
Lens
Charleville
Mézières
Douai
Arras
Sedan
Le Havre
Rouen
TGV Haute-Picardie
Rethel
Thionville
Reims
Mantes-la-Jolie
Metz
Forbach
Versailles
Aéroport Charles de Gaulle
Champagne-Ardenne TGV
Lorraine
PARIS
Saverne
Massy-Palaiseau
Strasbourg
Marne La Vallée-Chessy
Châlons-en-Champagne
Massy-TGV
Colmar
Nancy
Melun
Vitry-le-François
Bar-Le-Duc
Luneville
Mulhouse
Epinal
Sens
Remiremont
Belfort
Montbard
Laroche-Migennes
Montbéliard
Dijon
Dôle
Beaune
Besançon
Neuchâtel
Mouchard
Pontarlier
Bern
Le Creusot TGV
Frasne
Vallorbe
Chalon-sur-Saône
Lausanne
Mâcon
GENEVA
Evian-les-Bains
Annemasse
Bourg-en-Bresse
Bellegarde
St-Gervais
Annecy
LYON
Culoz
Aix-les-Bains
St-Étienne
Chambéry
Bourg-St-Maurice
Modane
Grenoble
Valence
Montélimar
Orange
Avignon
Menton
Nîmes
Aix-en-Provence-TGV
Monaco
Nice
Montpellier
Arles
Cannes
Antibes
Agde
Miramas
Sète
St-Raphaël
Béziers
Marseille
Les Arcs
Draguignan
Toulon
Narbonne
Perpignan
Plouaret-Trégor
Morlaix
St-Brieuc
St-Malo
Brest
Guingamp
Pol-de-Bretagne
Lamballe
Quimper
Laval
Le Mans
Rennes
Auray
Vannes
Vitré
Lorient
Redon
Sablé
Le Croisic
Savenay
Vendôme
Angers
La Baule
St-Pierre-des-Corps
St-Nazaire
Ancenis
Nantes
Tours
Saumur
Châtellerault
St-Maixent
Futuroscope
Niort
Poitiers
La Rochelle
Surgères
Ruffec
Angoulême
Libourne
Bordeaux
La Teste
Arcachon
Facture
Agen
Bayonne
Dax
Biarritz
Montauban
St Jean-de-Luz
Orthez
Toulouse
Irun
Hendaye
Pau
Tarbes
Lourdes
Carcassonne

The automatic ticket machines at the Gare de Lyon in Paris

FARES AND PASSES

Fare rates vary according to the type of train. For all trains that can be reserved online (TGV, Corail, Motorail), there are two or three basic fare rates for each class. The cheapest tickets are called Prem's, which must be bought well in advance and cannot be altered after payment. On most TER and some Corail trains, fares are cheaper at off-peak times *(périodes bleus)*; peak times *(périodes blanches)* are 5–10am Monday and 3–8pm Friday and Sunday.

SNCF sells several travel cards that give fare reductions of around 50 percent. Examples are the *Carte 12–25* for young people, *Carte Senior* for over-60s, *Carte Escapades* for frequent travelers, and *Carte Enfant* + for parents with small children. Further details are available on the SNCF website.

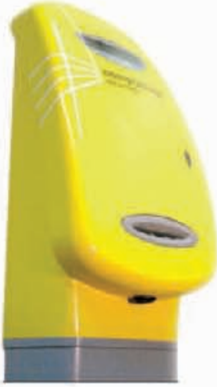
For visitors intending to make several train journeys around France it is worth investing in a multi-journey rail pass, which can only be bought outside the country. The **Inter-Rail** pass, for UK and other European residents, is valid for several European countries, giving unlimited travel for 3, 4, 6, or 8 days (not necessarily consecutively) within one month. Visitors from outside Europe can buy a France Railpass, permitting 3 to 10 days of unlimited travel within one month, or a **Eurail** Select Pass that covers France and neighboring countries. Be aware that some trains, including the TGV, charge additional supplements, which are usually included in the price. For more information visit the Rail Europe website.

BUYING TICKETS

Train tickets can be bought at any SNCF station and by phone or online. At most stations there are both staffed counters and automatic ticket machines *(billetterie automatique),* which accept cash or credit cards and have instructions in English. Tickets for trains that require a reservation (TGV, Corail, Motorail) can be bought up to 90 days in advance and up until five minutes before departure. Tickets bought in advance can be collected from the station, or sent to your address.

From outside France you can buy TGV, Corail, and Motorail tickets through www.voyages-sncf.com, the English arm of the SNCF website, although it can be easier to use Rail Europe. Travelers with mobility problems can arrange assistance through the *Accès Plus* program; more information is available online or from FranceGuide *(see pp668–71).*

Note that before any train journey in France, you must validate your ticket in a *composteur* machine.



TIMETABLES

French train timetables change twice a year, in May and September, and all can be consulted online. Stations sell the SNCF's full Ville-à-Ville timetable detailing mainline routes, and also have free regional TER timetables and information on the TGV network. Other free leaflets give information on topics such as traveling with children, reduced fares, and travel for the disabled.

DIRECTORY

RAIL INFORMATION

Autotrain
www.raileurope.com

Corail
www.coraillunea.com
www.corailteoz.com

Eurail
www.eurail.com

Inter-Rail
www.interailnet.com

Motorail
www.raileurope.com

Rail Europe
www.raileurope.com

SNCF
www.sncf.com

TER
www.ter-sncf.com

The Man in Seat 61
www.seat61.com

LOCAL RAILROADS

Chemins de Fer de la Corse
www.train-corse.com

Chemins de Fer de Provence
www.trainprovence.com

UNECTO
www.trains-fr.org

Composteur Machine
Yellow composteur *machines (left) are located in station halls and at the head of each platform. Insert tickets and reservations separately, printed side up. The* composteur *will punch your ticket and print the time and date on the back. A penalty may be imposed by the inspector on the train if you fail to do this.*

Traveling by Boat

With both Mediterranean and Atlantic coastlines, France offers excellent opportunities for sailing and has very good facilities. Inland, there is an extensive network of rivers, canals, and other waterways. Cruising through them is an ideal way to discover some of the country's most charming countryside. Frequent scheduled ferries also connect mainland France to Corsica and other parts of the Mediterranean as well as to the British Channel Islands off Normandy.

Boats moored along the Canal du Midi, Roussillon

TRAVELING BY FERRY

Car ferries sail to Corsica from Marseille, Nice, and Toulon, the main operators being **SNCM**, **CNM-La Méridionale**, and **Corsica Ferries**. There are services between Corsica and Sardinia, and **Moby Lines** also connects Corsica with Livorno and Genoa in mainland Italy. **LD Lines** and **Grimaldi Ferries** both sail between France and Italy. Regular ferries also connect France and North Africa; SNCM runs to Algeria and Tunisia, while **Comanav** has a luxury service from Sète to Morocco.

In the Atlantic, **Manche-Iles Express** and **Compagnie Corsaire** sail from St-Malo and the Normandy ports of Granville, Barneville-Carteret, and Diélette to the British Channel Islands. For a guide to all European ferry services visit www.ferrylines.com.

SAILING IN FRANCE

France has excellent sailing facilities, with marinas all around its coast. On the Atlantic coast, well-equipped ports include Honfleur and St-Vaast-la-Hougue in Normandy, St-Malo and Pleneuf-St-André in Brittany, and La Rochelle and Arcachon on the west coast. Among the best in the Mediterranean are St-Cyprien near the Spanish border, Antibes on the Cote d'Azur, and the small harbors of Corsica. Boats for charter or short-term rental are available at most marinas and information on rules and permits is available from the **Ministère de l'Ecologie**. The **Fédération Française de Voile** provides updates on sailing conditions.

CANAL AND RIVER TRIPS

There are many options for exploring French waterways, from short boat trips to cruises of several days. The official guide to the system is provided by **Voies Navigables de France**. Many companies offer cruises around France, among the best are **En Peniche**, which uses traditional barges or *peniches*, **Locaboat**, and **Crown Blue Line**. For narrow boats on the Canal du Midi, try **Minervois Cruisers**.

Short excursions are popular around the Marais Poitevin wetlands between La Rochelle and Poitiers, and along the Canal de Bourgogne from Dijon. **Les Caminades** runs trips along the Dordogne in traditional *gabarre* boats. For rides on the River Seine in Paris *see p689*.

DIRECTORY

FERRY SERVICES

CNM-La Méridionale
Tel *0810 201 320.* **www**.cnm.fr

Comanav
Tel *04 67 46 68 00.*

Compagnie Corsaire
Tel *0825 138 100.*
www.compagniecorsaire.com

Corsica Ferries
Tel *04 95 32 95 95.*
www.corsica-ferries.fr

Grimaldi Ferries
Tel *04 94 87 11 45* (in France).
www.grimaldi-lines.com

LD Lines
Tel *0800 650 100* (in France).
www.transmancheferries.com

Manche-Iles Express
Tel *0825 133 050* (in France),
01418 7013 (in Jersey).
www.manche-iles-express.com

Moby Lines
Tel *00 49 0611 14020.*
www.mobylines.com

SNCM
Tel *3260* (24-hrs for all ports).
www.sncm.fr

SAILING INFORMATION

Ministère de l'Ecologie
www.mer.gouv.fr

Fédération Française de Voile
www.ffvoile.net

CANAL AND RIVER TRIPS

Voies Navigables de France
www.vnf.fr

Les Caminades
Tel *05 53 29 40 95.*
www.best-of-perigord.tm.fr

Crown Blue Line
Tel *04 68 94 52 72*
www.crownblueline.com

En-Peniche
Tel *04 67 13 19 62.*
www.en-peniche.com

Locaboat
Tel *03 86 91 72 72.*
www.locaboat.com

Minervois Cruisers
Tel *01926 811842 (in UK).*
www.minervoiscruisers.com

On the Road

France's network of modern highways (autoroutes) allow quick and easy access to all parts of the country. However, you can save money on tolls and explore France in a more leisurely way by using some of the other high-quality roads that dissect the country. This section outlines both alternatives and gives instructions on how to use highway toll booths *(péage)* and French parking meters (*horodateurs*), as well as some of the rules governing driving in France. There are also tips on how to get weather and traffic forecasts, where to rent a car, and how to get the best road maps.

A 26
ST OMER
DUNKERQUE

Highway and main road signs

WHAT TO TAKE

Effective insurance is essential when taking a car to France. All car insurance policies in the EU automatically include minimum third-party insurance cover, which is valid in any EU country. However, the extent of cover provided beyond the legal minimum varies between insurance companies, so it is best to check your policy before you travel, and, if necessary, procure additional cover. For holders of fully comprehensive car insurance, most companies provide full European cover for a small extra premium; some do not charge for this, but still require you to notify them before traveling. It is also advisable to have breakdown cover with one of the Europe-wide networks with English-speaking phonelines.

While driving in France you must carry in the car your driver's licence, passport, the vehicle registration document, and a certificate of insurance. You must also have a set of spare light bulbs, at least one red warning triangle, and a luminous reflecting jacket to be worn if you ever have to stop on a highway because of a breakdown or other emergency. You can be fined if you are stopped by the police and do not have this equipment. The car's country of registration should be displayed on a sticker or as part of the license plate, and right-hand drive cars need headlamp deflectors for driving on the right – kits are available at most ports.

BUYING GAS

All fuel stations have unleaded gas and diesel fuel (*gazole* or *gas-oil*, or a higher-grade *gas-oil +*). Many stations also have LPG (*GPL*). The cheapest places to buy fuel in France are the stations attached to big supermarkets, however, these are closed on Sundays.

RULES OF THE ROAD

Wearing seat belts, in the front and back of the car, is compulsory in France, as is the use of booster seats for children under 10. It is illegal to use a cell phone while driving, even if it's on hands-free mode. Dipped headlights must be used in poor visibility, and motorcyclists must have dipped headlights lit at all times. Unless road signs indicate otherwise, *Priorité à droite* means that you must give way to any vehicle joining the road from the right except on traffic circles. Flashing headlights mean that the driver is claiming the right of way. For further details consult AA or RAC websites *(see p687)*.

SPEED LIMITS AND FINES

Speed limits in France are as follows:

- On autoroutes: 130 kph (80 mph); 110 kph (68 mph) when it rains.
- On divided highways: 110 kph (68 mph); 90–100 kph (56–62 mph) when it rains.
- On other roads: 90 kph (56 mph); 80 kph (49 mph) when it rains.
- In towns and villages: 50 kph (31 mph).

There are also lower speed limits on all roads for vehicles towing a trailer or camper.

On-the-spot fines are levied for speeding, not stopping at a Stop sign, for overtaking where forbidden, and exceeding the speed limit by over 40 kph (25 mph). Driving with over 0.05 percent alcohol in the blood is illegal.

HIGHWAYS

Most highways in France are toll roads (*autoroutes à péage*). The **Societé d'Autoroutes** website *(see p687)* lists the rates charged for each journey. There are also toll-free autoroutes, notably those around big cities like Paris (A3 and A86) and Lille, and some cross-country stretches such as the A84 from Caen to

DEMULDER & FILS
98
95
gazole
GPL

A sign at a gas pump points to *GPL* (LPG) or *gazole* (gasoline)

The scenic route around Mont Cenis Lake

Rennes, and the A75 south of Clermont-Ferrand.

Much of the autoroute network includes rest areas, gas stations every 25 miles (40 km) and emergency phones every mile (2 km).

OTHER ROADS

RN (*Route Nationale*) roads are the main alternative to highways for long-distance trips. They are often far more attractive, but can be more congested. To get really off the beaten track, travel by D (*départementale*) roads, which snake around the countryside. Look out for *Bis/Bison Futée* signs, which indicate quieter, alternative routes.

Try to avoid traveling at the French vacation rush periods known as *grands départs*. The worst times are weekends in mid-July, and the beginning and end of August.

Certain signs are particularly useful to know when driving in and out of towns. Follow *Centre Ville* signs for the town center and *Toutes Directions* (all routes) to take you out of the center to where you can find ongoing routes. If your destination is not signposted, follow *Autres Directions*.

SCENIC ROUTES

France's dense web of *Routes Nationales* and D–roads weave through some of the country's most gorgeous scenery. The most celebrated roads are in mountain regions, such as the Col du Galibier road over the Alps east of Grenoble (N91, then D902) but there are many others throughout the country. Some hug the coast, such as the roads along the Côte d'Azur or the rugged coasts of Brittany and Normandy. Information on these *routes touristiques* is available from tourist offices *(see p669).*

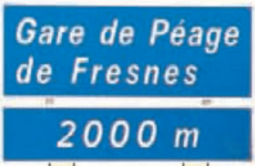
ROAD CONDITIONS

The French Highway Authorities' *Bison Futé* website *(see p687)* provides essential information for driving in France, with details of weather conditions, winter driving requirements, and road works. Check also www.autoroutes.fr for highway driving.

Motoring organizations like the **AA** and **RAC** sell tailor-made route-planning services, giving scenic options and road conditions *(see p687).*

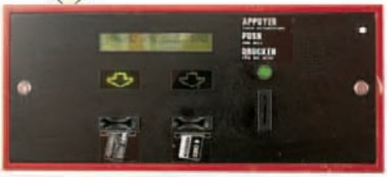
USING THE AUTOROUTE TOLL

Collect a ticket from the toll booth and keep it safe until you reach an exit toll where you will be charged according to the distance traveled and type of vehicle used. To pay at small tolls, just throw your coins into the large receptacle.



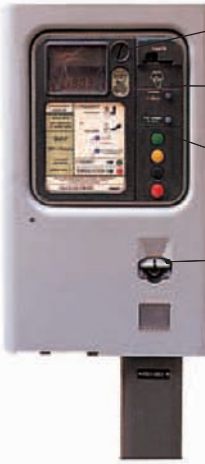
Highway Sign
These signs (left) indicate the name and distance to the next toll booth. They are usually blue and white; some show the tariff rates for cars, motorbikes, trucks, and RVs.

Toll Booth with Attendant
When you hand in your ticket at a manned toll booth, the attendant will tell you the cost of your journey on the autoroute and the price will be displayed. You can pay with coins, bills, credit cards, or with a check in Euros. A receipt is issued on request.



Automatic Machine
On reaching the exit toll, insert your ticket into the machine and the price of your journey is displayed in Euros. You can pay either with coins or by credit card. The machine will give change and can issue a receipt.

USING AN HORODATEUR MACHINE



1 If using coins, insert according to the tariff shown.

2 If using a card, insert and press the blue button for each 15 minutes required.

3 To obtain the ticket, press the green button.

4 Remove ticket when it emerges and place inside the car windshield.

Horodateurs
These parking meters operate from 9am–7pm Mon–Fri. Unless otherwise indicated, parking is free Sat–Sun, public holidays, and in August.

PARKING

Parking regulations vary from town to town, but most cities have street pay-and-display machines *(horodateurs)*, with spaces marked out in blue. Some machines accept a parking payment card sold at *tabacs*. Parking is normally limited to two hours. Charges are relatively low, and in most provincial towns parking is free between noon and 1:30pm. In narrow streets, parking may be confined to one side of the street and this can alternate at different times of the month.

Finding a parking space in larger cities, especially in Paris, can be difficult and it is often easier to use a parking lot. These are well indicated by a large ‘P’ sign accompanied by the word *libre* to indicate that there are spaces available.

CAR RENTAL

All the main international car-rental companies operate in France, as well as local French-based companies like **ADA** and **Rentacar**, which often have very competitive prices. You will nearly always get the best rates by reserving a car in advance through an Internet car rental reservation service like **Auto Europe** or **Autos Abroad**. Requirements for car rental vary, but in general you must be over 21 and have held a driver’s license for at least a year. You will need to present your license, passport, and a credit card against a deposit.

The price quoted should include all taxes and unlimited mileage. All rental contracts include basic third-party insurance, and some companies also include comprehensive insurance. Extras such as car seats, snow chains, or an automatic car, should be indicated when reserving.

Before you drive away check the general condition of the car and also check it has a set of spare bulbs, a warning triangle, and a luminous jacket, which are all legal requirements in France *(see p684)*.

MAPS

Each chapter in this guide begins with a map of the region showing all the sights and information on getting around. As additional maps, the excellent **Michelin** Tourist and Motoring Atlas at a scale of 1:200,000 is the most comprehensive driving map available. The red-cover Michelin maps of the whole of France (scale 1:1,000,000) are useful for planning trips, as are the regional maps with orange covers (scale 1:200,000). Larger scale Michelin maps with green covers are only for certain parts of France such as Paris and the French Riviera.

The **Institut Géographique National** (IGN), the equivalent of the British Ordnance Survey, produces high-quality maps in different scales. Particularly useful are their *Cartes de Randonnée* (scale 1:25,000), an excellent series of walking maps covering every part of the country. Also recommended, are the **Blay Foldex** town maps.

In France, all newsstands and gas stations stock maps and most tourist offices provide good free maps. In the UK, **Stanfords** is one of the best places to look for a full selection of French maps.

TRAVELING BY BUS

The French railroad is so fast and reliable that there is not much demand for long-distance buses and they tend to only operate in areas with poor train services.

Eurolines offers a wide range of low-priced international services, many of which make stops within France. These services are centered on the Porte de Bagnolet bus station in Paris (Métro Galliéni). The bus service **Ze Bus** is targeted mainly at backpackers and has routes from Paris to Normandy, Brittany, along the west coast to Spain, and through the Loire Valley.

Local buses are definitely an important means of transportation, particularly in rural areas. These run in and out of villages from the *gare routière* (bus station), which is often located next to the SNCF train station of the main town of each *département* or area. Buses run mostly at peak times to take people to and from work and school.

TAXIS

There are taxi services in every part of France, although in rural areas you will normally have to reserve a car

Mountain cyclists in the Alps

by phone. Hotels, bars, and restaurants will have the numbers of local taxis. Otherwise, in towns look for a taxi stand *(station de taxi)* outside train stations, airports, or in the town center.

All taxis must use meters *(compteurs)*, but prices do vary from one region to another. In general, the pick-up charge should be about €2 plus €0.5 or more per km. It is often possible to agree a fixed price for a long journey. For city taxis *see pp688–9.*

BICYCLING

Bicycling is extremely popular in France and facilities are steadily improving as part of the government-backed "Eco-mobility" scheme *(see p679)*. Several long-distance **Voies Vertes** footpaths and bike tracks have been created, and more are being established. Every local tourist office has a leaflet on nearby *véloroutes*, and many have developed their own schemes, such as the network of bike routes around the main Loire Valley châteaux *(La Loire à Vélo)*. Details are available from local tourist offices and *département* websites.

Bicycles can be taken on nearly all **SNCF** trains and on some routes you can reserve a rental bike at your destination station when buying a train ticket. There are also bike rental stores in nearly every town with standard and mountain bikes *(VTT)* for rent at reasonable prices. Tourist offices can advise on local companies.

More information on bicycling in France can be found on the Maisons de la France websites and through the **Fédération Française de Cyclisme** (in French only). Most cities offer rental bicycling schemes *(see p689).*

HITCHHIKING

It is not easy to get around France by hitchhiking, and it is not advisable to try either. There is, however, a safe car-sharing *(covoiturage)* program called Allostop (www.allostop.net), which has branches in many towns and through which you can set up rides at reasonable rates.

DIRECTORY

GENERAL DRIVING INFORMATION

AA
Tel *0800 085 7253.*
www.theaa.com

RAC
Tel *08705 722 722.*
www.rac.co.uk

Societé d'Autoroutes
www.autoroutes.fr

Zagaz
www.zagaz.com (for fuel price guide in French).

CAR RENTAL

ADA
Tel *0825 169 169.*
www.ada.fr

Autos Abroad
Tel *0845 029 1945* (UK).
www.autosabroad.com

Auto Europe
Tel *0800 358 1229* (UK), *1 888 223 5555* (USA & Canada).
www.auto-europe.com
www.auto-europe.co.uk

Avis
Tel *0820 050 505* (France), *0844 581 0147* (UK). **www**.avis.com

Budget
Tel *0825 003 564* (France), *0870 153 9170 (UK).* **www**.budget.com

Europecar
Tel *0825 358 358* (France), *0845 762 6640* (UK). **www**.europcar.com

Hertz
Tel *0825 861 861* (France), *0870 850 2677* (UK). **www**.hertz.com

National/Citer
Tel *0800 131 211* (France), *0870 400 4581* (UK).
www.nationalcar.com

Rentacar
Tel *0891 700 200.*
www.rentacar.fr

MAPS

Blay Foldex
www.blayfoldex.com

Institut Géographique National
www.ign.fr

Michelin
www.viamichelin.com

Stanfords
12–14 Long Acre,
London WC2E 9LP, UK.
Tel *020 7836 1321.*
www.stanfords.co.uk

BUS TRAVEL

Eurolines
Tel *0892 899 091.*
www.eurolines.fr

Ze Bus
Tel *05 59 85 26 60.*
www.ze-bus.com

BICYCLING

Fédération Française de Cyclisme
Tel *01 49 35 69 00.*
www.ffc.fr

SNCF
www.velo.sncf.com
(for train and bicycle travel – in French only).

Voies Vertes
www.voiesvertes.com

Traveling within Cities

The charming centers of France's cities are best enjoyed on foot. If, however, you need to cover a fair amount of ground in a day, it is best to use the excellent range of public transportation available. Paris and many other cities have tram and underground rail networks, often integrated with local train and bus services, and efforts have been made to create user-friendly ticketing systems. France has led the world in encouraging urban bike use as an alternative to the car, with easy-access bike-rental programs. In each city, local tourist offices will provide full information on services, including free maps.

Marseille tram traveling along the Boulevard Longchamp

PARIS METRO AND RER

The **RATP** operates 14 Métro underground train lines. The Métro is the most convenient way to get around the city, and you are never far away from a station in central Paris. Each line can be identified on maps and at stations by its color and its number. The direction the train is traveling in is indicated by the name of the station on the front of the train – this is always the last station on the route so it's worth checking the Métro map before boarding. Trains run frequently on each line from 5:20am–1:20am daily (to 2:20am Sat).

The newer RER lines complement the Métro system and run across Paris and out into the suburbs. There are five lines (A–E), each with several branches. Among the most useful for visitors are line B3, from Charles-de-Gaulle airport; A4, to Disneyland Paris Resort, and C5, to Versailles. Within Paris, RER lines can be quicker than the Métro for some journeys, since they have fewer stops.

OTHER METRO AND TRAM SYSTEMS

The cities of Lyon, Marseille, Toulouse, Lille, and Rennes all have Métro systems. The Lille Métro serves the whole conurbation known as Lille-Métropole, including towns such as Roubaix and Tourcoing. All Métros connect with SNCF railroads at main stations.

Rouen's two-line Métro is actually made up of overground trams (light rail lines) that connect the city to the outer suburbs. Some 22 other cities around France use trams as well as local buses, and Paris, too, has some suburban tram lines that connect with the Métro and RER.

BUSES

Every city has local buses. In Paris, RATP buses provide cheap opportunities for sightseeing. Throughout France, most routes operate from around 6am to midnight; routes and times are indicated at bus stops. Most cities also have several night bus routes and in Paris and the Ile-de-France, 42 Noctilien bus routes operate throughout the night, passing the main train stations. A fast-growing number of buses in Paris and other cities have wheelchair ramps. On all French city buses, you must board at the front of the bus, and get off through the middle or rear doors. Tickets can be bought from the driver or in advance from a range of outlets, which saves time when boarding.

LOCAL TRAINS

Regional TER lines *(see p681)* are operated by SNCF and are well integrated with local transportation around cities. In some cases, tickets are interchangeable. Around Paris the SNCF Transilien lines form a third level of rail services with the Métro and RER.

TAXIS

In Paris and most other cities taxis have a light on top of the car which is white when the taxi is free, and orange, or just switched off, when it is taken. Paris taxi fares are more expensive between 5pm and 10am, Monday–Saturday, and all day Sunday and holidays, and cost more for any journey outside central Paris (limited by but including the Boulevard Périphérique). Many taxis take credit cards, but often only for fares over €15. At busy times the best places to find taxis in Paris are taxi stands *(station de taxis)* marked with a blue T sign. Ranks are found at major road junctions and train stations. Though operated by several companies, there is now a single number to phone for taxis in Paris. All taxis in France are required to carry wheelchair users for no extra charge, but in the Paris region **Taxis G7** provide a specialized service for passengers with mobility problems.

In other cities taxis are similarly operated by several companies. Taxi ranks are found at airports, most train stations, and around city centers. Otherwise tourist offices and hotels can provide you with local firm numbers.

Taking a bicycle from one of the Vélib' stands in Paris

BICYCLING

Great efforts are underway in French cities to encourage town bicycling. On Sundays, some major streets are closed to traffic to make way for bicyclists and rollerbladers. Paris city council has a world-leading pro-cycling program, and expects to have 373 miles (600 km) of cycle routes by 2013. The centerpiece of the program is the **Vélib'** scheme, where you can pick up a basic bike at any one of hundreds of Vélib' stations around Paris and leave it at another. To do this you must purchase a Vélib' card, which are available for a day (€1) or a week and can be bought from machines at the Vélib' bike racks, or by annual subscription. Other cities run similar bike-sharing schemes under different names (the **Vélo'V** in Lyon, **Chti Vélo** in Lille, **Le Vélo** in Marseille). Tourist offices will have full information on them.

TICKETS

In Paris, RATP T-tickets are valid for city buses, the Métro and the RER. Tickets are available singly or for lower prices in carnets of 10 and can be bought at Métro and RER stations, the airports, tourist offices, and *tabacs*. Single tickets can also be bought on board buses but are not valid for other forms of transportation. Don't forget to validate your ticket.

An alternative aimed at tourists is the ParisVisite card, which gives unlimited travel on all systems for 1, 2, 3, or 5 days, as well as discounted admission fees to sights. The card is sold at Métro, RER, and train stations, as well as at tourist offices or online.

Nearly all larger cities offer some kind of city pass for visitors, giving unlimited travel and other advantages for one or more days. Enquire at tourist offices for local plans.

Cruise boats plying the river Seine

SEINE CRUISES

A boat trip on the Seine is one of the classic ways to see Paris. The long-running **Bateaux-Mouches**, **Bateaux Parisiens**, and **Vedettes du Pont-Neuf** offer traditional cruises along the river with multilingual commentary. The **Batobus** is a more flexible alternative, allowing you to hop on and off as many times as you want during the day. Another option is to see a more intimate side of Paris with a cruise along the St-Martin canal. Full information is available from tourist offices.

DIRECTORY

TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITIES

Lille – Transpole
www.transpole.fr

Lyon – TCL
Tel *0820 427 000.* **www**.tcl.fr

Marseille – Le Pilote/RTM
Tel *04 91 91 92 10.*
www.lepilote.com

Paris – RATP
Tel *3246.* **www**.ratp.fr

Rennes – STAR
Tel *0811 555 535.*
www.star.fr

Rouen – TCAR
Tel *02 35 52 52 52.*
www.tcar.fr

Toulouse – Tisséo
Tel *05 61 41 70 70.*
www.tisseo.fr

TAXIS

Paris Taxis
Tel *01 45 30 30 30.*

Taxis G7
Tel *01 47 39 47 39;* specially adapted taxis: *01 47 39 00 91 or 3607.* **www**.taxisg7.fr

BICYCLING SCHEMES

Chti Vélo (Lille)
Tel *03 28 53 07 49.*
www.chti-velo.fr

Le Vélo (Marseille)
Tel *0800 801 225.*
www.levelo-mpm.fr

Vélib' (Paris)
Tel *01 30 79 79 30.*
www.velib.paris.fr

Velo'V (Lyon)
Tel *0800 083 568.*
www.velov.grandlyon.com

SEINE CRUISES

Bateaux-Mouches
Tel *01 42 25 96 10.*
www.bateaux-mouches.fr

Bateaux Parisiens
Tel *0825 010 101.*
www.bateauxparisiens.com

Batobus
Tel *0825 050 101.*
www.batobus.com

Vedettes du Pont-Neuf
Tel *01 46 33 98 38.*
www.vedettesdupontneuf.com

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Contributors and Consultants
John Ardagh is a writer and broadcaster, and author of many books on France, among them *France Today* and *Writers' France*.

Rosemary Bailey has written and edited several guides to regional France, including *Burgundy,* the *Loire Valley*, and the *Côte d'Azur*.

Alexandra Boyle is a writer and editor who has worked in publishing in England and France for 20 years.

Elsie Burch Donald, editor and writer, is the author of *The French Farmhouse*.

David Burnie B.Sc. has written over 30 books on natural sciences, including *How Nature Works*.

Judith Fayard, an American based in Paris, was Paris bureau chief for *Life* magazine for 10 years, and is now European editor of *Town & Country*. She contributes to various publications, including the *Wall Street Journal*.

Lisa Gerard-Sharp is a broadcaster and author of several regional guides to France and Italy.

Robert Harneis is editorial correspondent for the English language newspaper *French News*.

Colin Jones is Professor of History at Exeter University. His books include *The Longman Companion to the French Revolution* and *The Cambridge Illustrated History of France*.

Alister Kershaw is an Australian writer and broadcaster who has lived in the Loire Valley for 30 years.

Alec Lobrano is an American writer, based in Paris. He is the European editor of *Departures* magazine and contributes to *International Herald Tribune, Los Angeles Times*, and *The Independent*.

Anthony Roberts is a writer and translator who has lived in Gascony for 15 years, contributing to various publications including *The Times, World of Interiors*, and *Architectural Digest*.

Anthony Rose is the wine correspondent of *The Independent* and co-author of *The Grapevine*.

Jane Sigal is the author of two books on French food, *Normandy Gastronomique* and *Backroom Bistros, Farmhouse Fare*.

Alan Tillier is the main contributor to the *Eyewitness Guide to Paris*. He has lived in Paris for more than 20 years as correspondent for various journals, including the *International Herald Tribune, Newsweek*, and *The Times*.

Nigel Tisdall is a travel writer and author of guides to Brittany and Normandy.

Patricia Wells is food critic of the *International Herald Tribune* and author of the *Food Lovers' Guide to Paris* and the *Food Lovers' Guide to France*.

Additional Contributors
Nathalie Boyer, Caroline Bugler, Ann Cremin, Jan Dodd, Bill Echikson, Robin Gauldie, Adrian Gilbert, Peter Graham, Marion Kaplan, Jim Keeble, Alexandra Kennedy, Rolli Lucarotti, Fred Mawer, Lyn Parry, Andrew Sanger, Katherine Spenley, Clive Unger-Hamilton, Roger Williams.

Additional Photography
Jo Craig, Andy Crawford, Michael Crockett, Mike Dunning, Philip Enticknap, Philippe Giraud, Steve Gorton, Alison Harris, John Heseltine, Roger Hilton, Andrew Holligan, Paul Kenwood, Oliver Knight, Eric Meacher, Neil Mersh, Roger Moss, Robert O'Dea, Ian O'Leary, Tony Souter, Alan Williams, Peter Wilson.

Additional Illustrations
Dinwiddie Maclaren, John Fox, Nick Gibbard, Paul Guest, Stephen Gyapay, Kevin Jones Associates, Chris Orr, Robbie Polley, Sue Sharples.

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Cartographic Research
Jennifer Skelley, Rachel Hawtin (Lovell Johns); James Mills-Hicks, Peter Winfield, Claudine Zarte (Dorling Kindersley Cartography).

Design and Editorial Assistance
Peter Adams, Azeem Alam, Elizabeth Ayre, Laetitia Benloulou, Steve Bere, Sonal Bhatt, Uma Bhattacharya, Hilary Bird, Anna Brooke, Arwen Burnett, Cate Craker, Maggie Crowley, Alison Culliford, Lisa Davidson, Simon Davis, Helen Foulkes, Fay Franklin, Tom Fraser, Anna Freiberger, Rhiannon Furbear, Catherine Gauthier, Eric Gibory, Emily Green, Vinod Harish, Robert Harneis, Elaine Harries, Victoria Heyworth-Dunne, Paul Hines, Nicholas Inman, Rosa Jackson, Sarah Jackson-Lambert, Laura Jones, Nancy Jones, Delphine Lawrance, Jude Ledger, Siri Lowe, Francesca Machiavelli, Carly Madden, Lesley McCave, Ella Milroy, Malcolm Parchment, Lyn Parry, Helen Partington, Shirin Patel, Alice Peebles, Alice Pennington-Mellor, Marianne Petrou, Pollyanna Poulter, Pete Quinlan, Salim Qurashi, Marisa Renzullo, Philippa Richmond, Nick Rider, Baishakhee Sengupta, Shailesh Sharma, Kunal Singh, Shruti Singhi, Andrew Szudek, Helen Townsend, Dora Whitaker, Fiona Wild, Nicholas Wood, Irina Zarb.

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Phrase Book

In an Emergency

Help!	**Au secours!**	oh sek**oor**
Stop!	**Arrêtez!**	aret-**ay**
Call a doctor!	**Appelez un médecin!**	apuh-**lay** uñ med**sañ**
Call an ambulance!	**Appelez une ambulance!**	apuh-**lay** oon oñboo-**loñs**
Call the police!	**Appelez la police!**	apuh-**lay** lah poh-**lees**
Call the fire department!	**Appelez les pompiers!**	apuh-lay leh poñ-**peeyay**
Where is the nearest telephone?	**Où est le téléphone le plus proche?**	oo ay luh tehleh**fon** luh ploo **prosh**
Where is the nearest hospital?	**Où est l'hôpital le plus proche?**	oo ay l'**opee**tal luh ploo **prosh**

Communication Essentials

Yes	**Oui**	wee
No	**Non**	noñ
Please	**S'il vous plaît**	seel voo **play**
Thank you	**Merci**	mer-**see**
Excuse me	**Excusez-moi**	exkoo-**zay** mwah
Hello	**Bonjour**	boñ**zhoor**
Goodbye	**Au revoir**	oh ruh-**vwar**
Good night	**Bonsoir**	boñ-**swar**
Morning	**Le matin**	mat**añ**
Afternoon	**L'après-midi**	l'apreh-**meedee**
Evening	**Le soir**	swar
Yesterday	**Hier**	ee**yehr**
Today	**Aujourd'hui**	oh-zhoor-**dwee**
Tomorrow	**Demain**	duh**mañ**
Here	**Ici**	ee-**see**
There	**Là**	lah
What?	**Quel, quelle?**	kel, kel
When?	**Quand?**	koñ
Why?	**Pourquoi?**	poor-**kwah**
Where?	**Où?**	oo

Useful Phrases

How are you?	**Comment allez-vous?**	kom-moñ tal**ay voo**
Very well, thank you.	**Très bien, merci.**	treh byañ, mer-**see**
Pleased to meet you.	**Enchanté de faire votre connaissance.**	oñshoñ-**tay** duh fehr votr kon-ay-**sans**
See you soon.	**A bientôt.**	byañ-**toh**
That's fine	**Voilà qui est parfait**	vwalah kee ay par**fay**
Where is/are…?	**Où est/sont…?**	oo ay/soñ
How far is it to…?	**Combien de kilomètres d'ici à…?**	kom-**byañ** duh keelo-**metr** d'ee-**see** ah
Which way to…?	**Quelle est la direction pour…?**	kel ay lah **deer**-ek-**syoñ** poor
Do you speak English?	**Parlez-vous anglais?**	par-**lay** voo oñg-**lay**
I don't understand.	**Je ne comprends pas.**	zhuh nuh kom-**proñ** pah
Could you speak slowly please?	**Pouvez-vous parler moins vite s'il vous plaît?**	poo-**vay** voo par-**lay** mw**añ** veet seel voo play
I'm sorry.	**Excusez-moi.**	exkoo-**zay** mwah

Useful Words

big	**grand**	groñ
small	**petit**	puh-**tee**
hot	**chaud**	show
cold	**froid**	frwah
good	**bon**	boñ
bad	**mauvais**	moh-**veh**
enough	**assez**	as**say**
well	**bien**	byañ
open	**ouvert**	oo-**ver**
closed	**fermé**	fer-**meh**
left	**gauche**	gohsh
right	**droit**	drwah
straight ahead	**tout droit**	too drwah
near	**près**	preh
far	**loin**	lwañ
up	**en haut**	oñ **oh**
down	**en bas**	oñ **bah**
early	**de bonne heure**	duh bon **urr**
late	**en retard**	oñ ruh-**tar**
entrance	**l'entrée**	l'on-**tray**
exit	**la sortie**	sor-**tee**
restroom	**les toilettes, les WC**	**twah**-let, vay-**see**
free, unoccupied	**libre**	leebr
free, no charge	**gratuit**	grah-**twee**

Making a Telephone Call

I'd like to place a long-distance call.	**Je voudrais faire un interurbain.**	zhuh voo-dreh fehr uñ añter-oorbañ
I'd like to make a collect call.	**Je voudrais faire une communication PCV.**	zhuh voo**dreh** fehr oon komoonikah-**syoñ** peh-seh-veh
I'll try again later.	**Je rappelerai plus tard.**	zhuh rapel-**eray**ploo tar
Can I leave a message?	**Est-ce que je peux laisser un message?**	es-**keh** zhuh puh leh-**say** uñ meh**sazh**
Hold on.	**Ne quittez pas, s'il vous plaît.**	nuh kee-**tay** pah seel voo play
Could you speak up a little please?	**Pouvez-vous parler un peu plus fort?**	poo-**vay** voo par-**lay** uñ puh ploo for
local call	**la communication locale**	komoonikah-**syoñ** low-**kal**

Shopping

How much does this cost?	**C'est combien s'il vous plaît?**	say kom-**byañ** seel voo play
I would like …	**je voudrais…**	zhuh voo-**dray**
Do you have?	**Est-ce que vous avez?**	es-**kuh** voo zav**ay**
I'm just looking.	**Je regarde seulement.**	zhuh ruh**gar** suhl**moñ**
Do you accept credit cards?	**Est-ce que vous acceptez les cartes de crédit?**	es-**kuh** voo zaksept-**ay** leh kart duh kreh-**dee**
Do you accept traveler's checks?	**Est-ce que vous acceptez les chèques de voyage?**	es-**kuh** voo zaksept-**ay** leh shek duh vwa**yazh**
What time do you open?	**A quelle heure vous êtes ouvert?**	ah kel urr voo zet oo-**ver**
What time do you close?	**A quelle heure vous êtes fermé?**	ah kel urr voo zet fer-**may**
This one.	**Celui-ci.**	suhl-wee-**see**
That one.	**Celui-là.**	suhl-wee-**lah**
expensive	**cher**	shehr
cheap	**pas cher, bon marché**	pah shehr, boñ mar-**shay**
size, clothes	**la taille**	tye
size, shoes	**la pointure**	pwañ-**tur**
white	**blanc**	bloñ
black	**noir**	nwahr
red	**rouge**	roozh
yellow	**jaune**	zhohwn
green	**vert**	vehr
blue	**bleu**	bluh

Types of Stores

antiques shop	**le magasin d'antiquités**	maga-**zañ** d'oñteekee-**tay**
bakery	**la boulangerie**	booloñ-**zhuree**
bank	**la banque**	boñk
book store	**la librairie**	lee-**brehree**
butcher	**la boucherie**	boo-**shehree**
cake store	**la pâtisserie**	patee-**sree**
cheese store	**la fromagerie**	fromazh-**ree**
pharmacy	**la pharmacie**	farmah-**see**
dairy	**la crémerie**	krem-**ree**
department store	**le grand magasin**	groñ maga-**zañ**
delicatessen	**la charcuterie**	sharkoot-**ree**
fish store	**la poissonnerie**	pwasson-**ree**
gift store	**le magasin de cadeaux**	maga-**zañ** duh ka**doh**
fruit and vegetable store	**le marchand de légumes**	mar-**shoñ** duh lay-**goom**
grocery	**l'alimentation**	alee-moñta-**syoñ**
hairdresser	**le coiffeur**	kwa**fuhr**
market	**le marché**	marsh-**ay**
newsstand	**le magasin de journaux**	maga-**zañ** duh zhoor-**no**
post office	**la poste, le bureau de poste, le PTT**	pohst, boo**roh** duh pohst, peh-teh-teh
shoe store	**le magasin de chaussures**	maga-**zañ** duh show-**soor**
supermarket	**le supermarché**	soo pehr-**marshay**
tobacconist	**le tabac**	tabah
travel agent	**l'agence de voyages**	l'azhoñs duh vwayazh

Sightseeing

abbey	**l'abbaye**	l'abay-**ee**
art gallery	**la galerie d'art**	galer-**ree** dart
bus station	**la gare routière**	gahr roo-tee-**yehr**

cathedral	**la cathédrale**	katay-**dral**
church	**l'église**	l'ayg**leez**
garden	**le jardin**	zhar-**dañ**
library	**la bibliothèque**	beeb**leeo**-tek
museum	**le musée**	moo-**zay**
tourist information office	**les renseignements touristiques, le syndicat d'initiative**	roñsayn-**moñ** too-rees-**teek**, sandee-ka d'eenee-sya**teev**
town hall	**l'hôtel de ville**	l'oh**tel** duh veel
train station	**la gare (SNCF)**	gahr (es-en-say-ef)
private mansion	**l'hôtel particulier**	l'oh**tel** partikoo-**lyay**
closed for public holiday	**fermeture jour férié**	fehrmeh-**tur** zhoor fehree-**ay**

Staying in a Hotel

Do you have a vacant room?	**Est-ce que vous avez une chambre?**	es-kuh voo-**zavay** oon shambr
double room, with double bed	**la chambre à deux personnes, avec un grand lit**	shambr ah duh pehr-**son** avek un gronñ lee
twin room	**la chambre à deux lits**	shambr ah duh lee
single room	**la chambre à une personne**	shambr ah oon pehr-**son**
room with a bath, shower	**la chambre avec salle de bains, une douche**	shambr avek sal duh bañ, oon doosh
porter	**le garçon**	gar-**soñ**
key	**la clef**	klay
I have a reservation.	**J'ai fait une réservation.**	zhay fay oon rayzehrva-**syoñ**

Eating Out

Have you got a table?	**Avez-vous une table libre?**	avay-**voo** oon tahbl leebr
I want to reserve a table.	**Je voudrais réserver une table.**	zhuh voo-**dray** rayzehr-**vay** oon tahbl
The check please.	**L'addition s'il vous plaît.**	l'adee-**syoñ** seel voo **play**
I am a vegetarian.	**Je suis végétarien.**	zhuh swee vezhay-**tehryañ**
Waitress/ waiter	**Madame, Mademoiselle/ Monsieur**	mah-**dam**, mah-demwah**zel**/ muh-**syuh**
menu	**le menu, la carte**	men-**oo**, kart
fixed-price menu	**le menu à prix fixe**	men-**oo** ah pree feeks
cover charge	**le couvert**	koo-**vehr**
wine list	**la carte des vins**	**kart**-deh vañ
glass	**le verre**	vehr
bottle	**la bouteille**	boo-**tay**
knife	**le couteau**	koo-**toh**
fork	**la fourchette**	for-**shet**
spoon	**la cuillère**	kwee-**yehr**
breakfast	**le petit déjeuner**	puh-**tee** deh-**zhuh-nay**
lunch	**le déjeuner**	deh-**zhuh-nay**
dinner	**le dîner**	dee-**nay**
main course	**le plat principal**	plah prañsee-**pal**
appetizer, first course	**l'entrée, le hors d'oeuvre**	l'oñ-**tray**, or-duhvr
dish of the day	**le plat du jour**	plah doo zhoor
wine bar	**le bar à vin**	bar ah vañ
café	**le café**	ka-**fay**
rare	**saignant**	**say**-noñ
medium	**à point**	ah **pwañ**
well-done	**bien cuit**	byañ **kwee**

Menu Decoder

l'agneau	l'an**yoh**	lamb
l'ail	l'eye	garlic
la banane	ba**nan**	banana
le beurre	burr	butter
la bière, bière à la pression	bee-**yehr**, bee-**yehr** ah lah pres-**syoñ**	beer, draft beer
le bifteck, le steack	beef-**tek**, stek	steak
le boeuf	buhf	beef
bouilli	boo-**yee**	boiled
le café	kah-**fay**	coffee
le canard	kan**ar**	duck
le chocolat	**shoko**-lah	chocolate
le citron	see-**troñ**	lemon
le citron pressé	see-**troñ** press-**eh**	fresh lemon juice
les crevettes	kruh-**vet**	shrimp
les crustacés	**kroos**-ta-**say**	shellfish
cuit au four	kweet oh foor	baked
le dessert	deh-**ser**	dessert
l'eau minérale	l'oh **meeney**-ral	mineral water
les escargots	leh zes-kar-**goh**	snails
les frites	freet	French fries
le fromage	from-**azh**	cheese
le fruit frais	frwee freh	fresh fruit
les fruits de mer	frwee duh mer	seafood
le gâteau	gah-**toh**	cake
la glace	glas	ice, ice cream
grillé	gree-**yay**	grilled
le homard	om**ahr**	lobster
l'huile	l'weel	oil
le jambon	zhoñ-**boñ**	ham
le lait	leh	milk
les légumes	lay-**goom**	vegetables
la moutarde	moo-**tard**	mustard
l'oeuf	l'uf	egg
les oignons	leh zon**yoñ**	onions
les olives	leh zo**leev**	olives
l'orange	l'oroñzh	orange
l'orange pressée	l'oroñzh press-**eh**	fresh orange juice
le pain	pan	bread
le petit pain	puh-**tee** pañ	roll
poché	posh-**ay**	poached
le poisson	pwah-**ssoñ**	fish
le poivre	pwavr	pepper
la pomme	pom	apple
les pommes de terre	pom-duh **tehr**	potatoes
le porc	por	pork
le potage	poh-**tazh**	soup
le poulet	poo-**lay**	chicken
le riz	ree	rice
rôti	row-**tee**	roast
la sauce	sohs	sauce
la saucisse	soh**sees**	sausage,
sec	sek	dry
le sel	sel	salt
la soupe	soop	soup
le sucre	sookr	sugar
le thé	tay	tea
le toast	toast	toast
la viande	vee-**yand**	meat
le vin blanc	vañ **bloñ**	white wine
le vin rouge	vañ **roozh**	red wine
le vinaigre	vee**naygr**	vinegar

Numbers

0	**zéro**	zeh-**roh**
1	**un, une**	uñ, oon
2	**deux**	duh
3	**trois**	trwah
4	**quatre**	katr
5	**cinq**	sañk
6	**six**	sees
7	**sept**	set
8	**huit**	weet
9	**neuf**	nerf
10	**dix**	dees
11	**onze**	oñz
12	**douze**	dooz
13	**treize**	trehz
14	**quatorze**	ka**torz**
15	**quinze**	kañz
16	**seize**	sehz
17	**dix-sept**	dees-**set**
18	**dix-huit**	dees-**weet**
19	**dix-neuf**	dees-**nerf**
20	**vingt**	vañ
30	**trente**	tront
40	**quarante**	kar**oñt**
50	**cinquante**	sañk**oñt**
60	**soixante**	swas**oñt**
70	**soixante-dix**	swasoñt-**dees**
80	**quatre-vingts**	katr-**vañ**
90	**quatre-vingt-dix**	katr-vañ-**dees**
100	**cent**	soñ
1,000	**mille**	meel

Time

one minute	**une minute**	oon mee-**noot**
one hour	**une heure**	oon urr
half an hour	**une demi-heure**	oon **duh-mee** urr
Monday	**lundi**	luñ-**dee**
Tuesday	**mardi**	mar-**dee**
Wednesday	**mercredi**	mehrkruh-**dee**
Thursday	**jeudi**	zhuh-**dee**
Friday	**vendredi**	voñdruh-**dee**
Saturday	**samedi**	sam-**dee**
Sunday	**dimanche**	dee-**moñsh**